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the comics magazine • 83

Q: If a person is only as good as his word, why are there so many liars? A: HELLBLAZER

Q: If it's always darkest before the dawn, what comes before the darkness? A: THE DREAMING

Q: Just desserts or blind justice? A: GANGLAND

Q: If growing up is hard, what makes childhood seem easy? A: THE BOOKS OF MAGIC

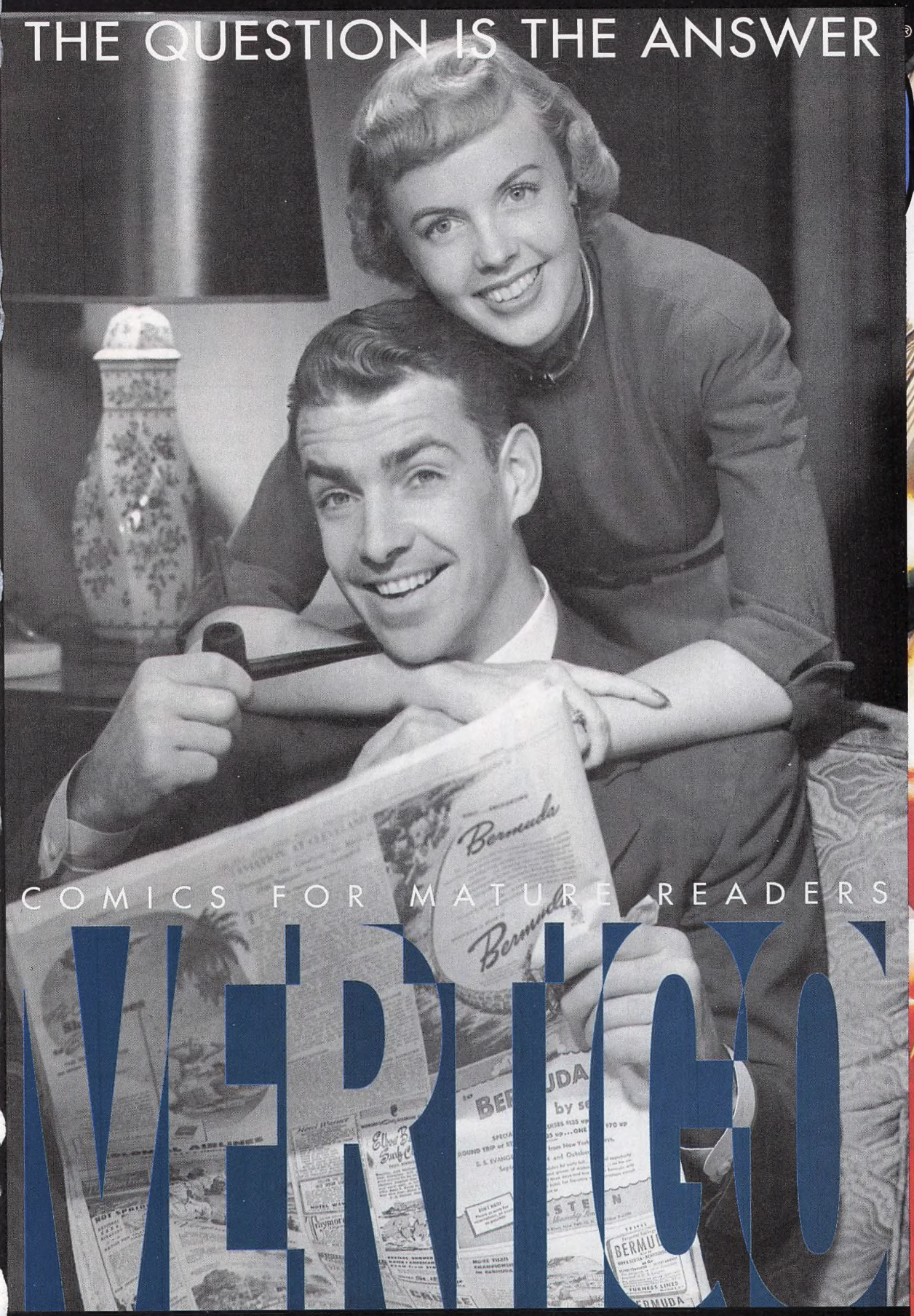
Q: If chaos is inevitable, why do we bother creating order? A: THE MINX

Q: Shadow conspiracies or cool paranoid ravings? A: THE INVISIBLES

Q: If God is with us, where's the Devil? A: PREACHER

Q: If death is the long sleep, why are we afraid to die? A: SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE

Q: Truth is beauty or the ugly truth? A: NEVADA



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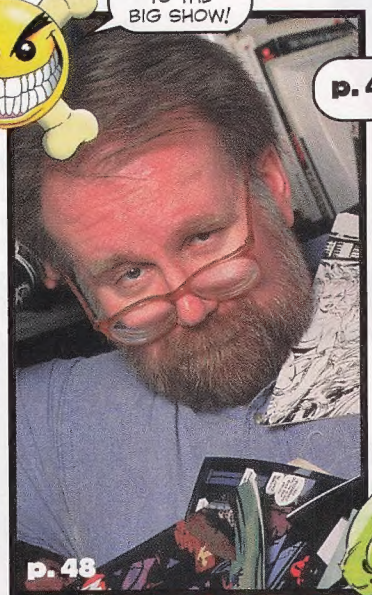
WIZARD® contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 83 • JULY 1998

p. 36



p. 48

p. 42

FEATURES

36 SPICY GIRLS
Wizard ranks comics' top 10 sexiest women. **By the *Wizard* Staff**

42 THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO
Who is the best superhero ever? **By the *Wizard* Staff**

48 THE WIZARD Q&A: JOHN BYRNE
John Byrne, the man who reinvented Superman, sets his sights on a Spidey revamp. And there's no one better for the job. Just ask him. **By Tom Russo**

56 1998 SUMMER PREVIEW
A sneak peek at the storylines of this summer's hottest comic books. **By Matthew Brady**

p. 56

ON THE COVERS

Superbabes (left) was illustrated and colored by Adam Hughes. Flip to **page 36** to see who we deemed the 10 sexiest female characters in comics. **Astro City** was painted by Alex Ross. Jam on over to **page 56** to see what the summer holds for *Astro City* and your favorite comics in our summer preview guide.

p. 106

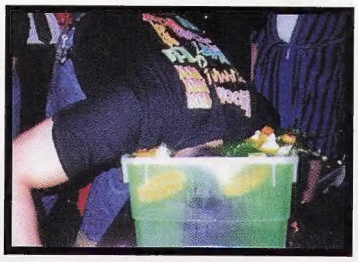
CONTESTS

90 HALLOWEEN
What are we, nuts? We're offering you a chance to work at *Wizard* for a day and join the entire staff at this year's annual Halloween bash!

100 DC SUMMER
Draw your favorite DC Comics characters havin' fun in the sun, and you can walk away with a library of funky DC trade paperbacks.

132 SMILEY MONTH
Count the Smileys in this ish, and win a mouthful of Smileytastic prizes from Chaos! Comics, including autographed comics, original art, a Smiley watch and more!

p. 90



STANDARDS

6 FROM THE TOP
8 MAGIC WORDS
22 WIZARD NEWS & NOTES
34 LAST MAN STANDING
BANE VS. SABRETOOTH
82 CASTING CALL DEADPOOL
86 COMING ATTRACTIONS
92 BASIC TRAINING
HOW TO DRAW SPAWN!
96 DRAWING BOARD
102 TOY CHEST
106 STUFF
110 VIDEO STUFF
114 HOMEMADE HEROES
118 CHARACTER PROFILE
CHANCE FALCONER
120 TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS
122 PICKS
128 REPORT CARD
135 MANGA SCENE
138 MARKET WATCH
141 TOP 10 COMICS
142 TOP 100
146 INTRO TO THE PRICE GUIDE
150 COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE
200 SHOWS & CONVENTIONS
204 MISC. STUFF
206 C.B.I.Q.
207 BULLPEN
208 TIME TRAVEL

DEADPOOL CASTING CALL: p. 82

p. 34

p. 102

COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

SPIDER-MAN #1/2

Arachnophobia! Here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Spider-Man* #1/2 comic, featuring the wall-crawler in a tale taking him from his past through his present and into his future, by Tom DeFalco and Rick Leonardi. Swing on over to **page 80**.

THOR PHOTO: BOWEN DESIGNS; JAY AND SILENT BOB PHOTO: GRAPHITTI DESIGNS.

TALK ABOUT A HELL-OF-A-DEAL

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"I'M THE LORD OF THE DANCE, AND I'LL KICK YOUR BUTT, UNION JACK!"

TALKIN' TOYS

Let's talk toys. We started *ToyFare* magazine because we got such a huge response from the toy sections in *Wizard*. This year will be the breakout year for comic book characters in action figures. I think just about every major character you now enjoy (or even can't stand) will probably be an action figure within the next 12 months. This is really exciting.

There's always been a barrier in the toy market as to how much you can charge for an action figure. Well, a few years ago, Todd McFarlane proved you can charge more, especially for a high-quality figure. Now, the floodgates have been opened. There's still a very high cost to enter the toy market because it is very expensive to make a tool to squeeze the plastic into the right shapes. That's why many toy lines you'll find in the comic book stores—and not in the mass market—are at least double the price you'd normally pay. The companies are clearly not making as many toys, and they have to spread a large cost over a fewer number of toys.

I just got back from a trip to Texas to meet the incredibly talented Clayburn Moore and company. He's got some great action figures on the way, everything from Witchblade II to Darkness figures to—well, I'm not allowed to reveal the rest, but they're very cool. I've also met with just about every major toy company—Toy Biz, Kenner, Mattel, Playmates, Galoob and many more—to see what's on the horizon. We're even hearing that DC is finally going to make more toys. All I can say is thank God I don't have to pay for my toys anymore or I'd really be broke.

Every month we ask what toys you'd like to see made from the companies, and we publish the top 10 in our "Wish List" sidebar to "Toy Chest." There have been over 50 toys that we recommended through *Wizard* that have gotten made. So ya see, it is worth writing in to us; together we can get more toys made.

This month marks the beginning of the three *Wizard* summer issues with a "Comics are Cool" theme. We've got some great editorial stuff this month, including a summer preview guide to today's hottest comics, a great John Byrne Q&A looking at the changes he has in store for Spider-Man, a look at the top 10 hottest female comic characters and the ultimate *Wizard* feature, where we pick the greatest superhero of all time. Hope you enjoy it.

See ya!

Gareb S. Shamus

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MAGIC WORDS

EARTHQUAKE DESTROYS BYRNE... DAREDEVIL IN THE NBA... AND DONUTS FOR EVERYONE!

Things you guys love, as near as I can tell from reading your letters:

• "LAST MAN STANDING," the spankin'-new battles-you-thought-you'd-never-see monthly feature in *Wizard*. We got off to a rollickin' start with the Hulk vs. Doomsday bout (Featuring great new Art Adams art!) in #81. Everyone seemed to dig it, even though opinions as to whom would actually win the battle were split. My opinion? It differs from the "official" *Wizard*-published opinion, but I think we all know the answer is simple: Hulk smash!

• KEVIN SMITH. The "Chasing Amy" (and now *Daredevil* and *Green Arrow*) writer is a guy with real-world movie fame who remains true to his comic roots. You seem to like that 'bout him.

• EARTH X! Alex Ross' ideas for the future of Marvel's characters ran as a special insert comic called *Earth X* in *Wizard* #77, and you haven't stopped talking about it yet. Word on the drum is that a real *Earth X* comic might actually happen by 1999.

• "WIZARD U.," the feature on comic-related college courses from issue #80. It's generated lots o' letters, including this one...

Dear Jim,

But wait, there's more!

There's one more university-level comics class *not* listed in "Wizard U." in *Wizard* #80.

In October 1998, I'll teach comic writing at UCLA through the school's "extension" program, which offers classes that anyone—whether or not they're a UCLA student—can take.

Each student will write an eight-page comic story, from rough premise to final script, aided by myself (a former comics editor and sometime comics writer) and a few guest speakers. When I've taught the class before, guest speakers have included Kurt Busiek, Mark Evanier, Howard Chaykin, Len Wein and Marv Wolfman.

Questions? Call (310) 825-4321 and ask for Ray Montalvo in the Extension Writers' Program. Or call me at (310) 652-4369.

David Seidman
West Hollywood, CA

Mr. Seidman has worked extensively for Claypool Comics and knows his stuff. So all you Los Angeles-area wannabe writers out there (and you know you're out there) may wanna check this out.

And, hey—see if you can score me some UCLA Bruins basketball tickets while you're at it.

Dear Wizard Staff,

The "Our Family Album" Superman scrapbook from *Wizard* #80 was great. It described wonderfully what the Man of Steel is all about. But there's one thing that troubles me. Bear in mind that I am neither a seismologist nor a cartographer, but one of the news clips you ran dealt with what must have been one holy roller of an earthquake! The dateline read "Byrne, Nevada," and said that Byrne was "a small Nevada town about 300 miles west of Los Angeles."

Isn't that, like, in the Pacific Ocean?

Matt Grubaugh
mblake@kiva.net

Uh...yeah. Going 300 miles due west of Los Angeles would put

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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Hey, Jim,

While watching the 1998 NBA All-Star Game, I started wondering what it would be like if Marvel Comics' characters were in the NBA. So I put together a Marvel Dream Team. If we could make these guys play nicey-nice with each other, we'd beat the pants off everyone:

Point guard: Daredevil. His radar sense allows him to know where everyone is on the court at all times, making him the perfect passer.

Shooting guard (Literally!): Bullseye. His name says it all. He never misses a shot.

Small forward: Taskmaster. He's got the ability to mimic the abilities of anyone he observes. Imagine what he could do after watching videos of Kobe Bryant or Larry Bird!

Power forward: Beast. Ol' furball has the size of a traditional power forward, *and* he's quicker, more agile and can dunk with his feet.

Center: Venom. Although not nearly a 7-footer, you'd better believe he can bang bodies with Shaq and Bryant "Big Country" Reeves.

So there you have it.

Ian Seet
Republic of Singapore
renny_insanity@hotmail.com

Not too shabby. But I see two possible upgrades:

If you're looking for "power" in your power forward, they don't get much better than the Hulk. Ol' Greenskin can go strong to the hole and box out under the glass better than anyone. And at center? I like a big man in the traditional big man's role. Gimme Stilt-Man! His adjustable legs are quite an asset. I think he'd easily lead the league in blocked shots.

There's a new team in town. Michael Jordan, are you listening? Now would be a good time to retire.

you smack-dab in the middle of the Pacific. But don't blame us! We just ran the clippings in the scrapbook. Blame those pseudo-journalists over at the *Smallville Post*.

Mr. McLauchlin,

While reading some older comics, I came across the *DC vs. Marvel/Marvel vs. DC* mini-series from 1996. Since there were only two months between the release of #1 and #3, and readers got to vote on the outcomes of five battles, I got to wondering: How did they print the battles in so little time? Did they make two different outcomes, and then just print the one that got the most votes? If this is the case, how I could possibly see the pages that never made it?

Alex Liu
AlexLiu@worldnet.att.net

Such is indeed the case. Artists Claudio Castellini and Dan Jurgens each penciled half the mini-series, and both men prepared two endings for each battle. Each battle scene was constructed so that only a few panels needed to differ.

And those different panels? They'll probably never see the light of day. Castellini and Jurgens' contracts prohibit them from *ever* showing those alternate endings. Why are they such a deep, dark secret? No one will say. But Jurgens says he might be convinced to let a page or two slip if properly plied with "boxes of Ho-Hos, or maybe a new animated Robin action figure." Let the plying begin.

Jim,

I was reading the fine print on the side of an old "Marvel Super-Heroes" puzzle and noticed the phrase "Super-Heroes is a registered trademark jointly owned by the Marvel Comics Group and DC Comics Inc." Does this mean that the term "Super-Hero" can only be used by these two companies?

Chris Ruddick
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

In that form, yes. DC and Marvel co-hold the trademark for "Super-Hero," with a capital "H" and a dash. Why's it a joint trademark? Near as my research turns up, they were using the term simultaneously for so long, neither could lay claim to it as all its own.

What's this mean? Well, legally speaking, companies like Image, Dark Horse or Sirius cannot refer to any of their characters as a "Super-Hero." 'Course, they can refer to them as "superheroes" all the live-long day. And that's what we at *Wizard* do, too. We use the generic term "superhero," even when referring to Marvel or DC characters.

Yo, Jim,

On my *Kingdom Come* paperback, DC's "Elseworlds" logo is plainly visible, leading me to believe that it's a story not in continuity. But lately, I've heard lots of things about *Kingdom Come* being the "real" DC future. And what with the recent *Gog* one-shot that ties into *Kingdom Come*, I'm left wondering what's going on here. Is the *KC* future the real one, or what?

Chris Judge
Hong Kong

According to Patty Jeres, DC's mistress of information, *Kingdom Come* is an "Elseworlds" story, but the door is still open for current DC continuity to become that future.

And it's been hinted that the upcoming *Starman* #50 is yet another *Kingdom Come* tie-in. So we'll see.

Dear Jim,

A thought struck me while reading the "Thor" feature in *Wizard*

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCIBRALCA

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address on page 14 (put your age on the envelope). If you want your Internet address listed instead, the only way to do this is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; go to the Message Boards and look under "Wizard Bulletin Board"). C'mon, make a friend!

#80: How is John Romita Jr. able to manage two monthly books while most of today's artists aren't even able to keep to a deadline on *one* book?

There was a time when great artists like Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Don Heck and Gil Kane could draw several books and *still* maintain high standards for their work. I would expect that today's artists would be able to do the same—if not more—since new technologies and advancements give these new artists much more time.

Leslie Lee
Republic of Singapore
lesbo@mbox4.singnet.com.sg

John Jr., who's taking on both *Thor* and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*, says there's no big secret. "That's what weekends are for. I just work extra-hard. If I need to, I can do 2 1/2 pages a day. And John Byrne can do even more. He could draw three books a month. I think everyone can do it. It's just a matter of the proper mindset."

As to artists of ye olden days versus today's variety, John Romita Sr., longtime *Amazing Spider-Man* artist of the 1960s, agrees with his kid. "It's mostly mental. In the '60s, we just had the mindset that the work had to get done." The senior Romita also says that if anything, new technology makes things tougher. "We never had to think about computer separations," he says. "Now, artists can get all sorts of extra detail and technique in there. I never felt a need to 'technique' a page to death. I just wanted to tell a solid story. The key is not to try to outdo what someone else did with technique. Just do the best job *you* can do."

Hey Jim,

What is Marvel's financial status at the moment? Are they still in Chapter 11 bankruptcy?

Geoff Mosse
Capt Lydon@aol.com

Yep. At press time, Marvel was still stuck in Chapter 11 (reorganization) bankruptcy. Not that you'd really notice, though. While Marvel Entertainment Group as a whole (including trading cards, stickers, international ventures, etc.) is still losing money, comic publishing all by itself was profitable in 1997 and the books keep getting cranked out.

The only thing that can get Marvel out of bankruptcy? A successful change of ownership, which is subject to the bankruptcy judge's approval. Stay tuned.

Dear Jim,

Why is the Yancy Street Gang always messing with the Thing?

Scott Majeur
ThespianEA@aol.com

Strangely enough, Marvel Comics editor and unofficial house historian Tom Brevoort tells us it's because...he's

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Age: 18 Sex: Male
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MAURO MADERO
Age: 24 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 09-01-845
Guayaquil, Ecuador
Likes: all Superman titles, *JLA, X-Men*

KRISTIN POOL
Age: 13 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 11
Glen Ellen, CA 95442
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JOSH WILLIAMS
Age: 12 Sex: Male
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Panacea, FL 32346
Likes: *Spawn* X-titles, Spider-Man titles

MITCH GRIFFIS
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RON DAVIS
Age: 24 Sex: Male
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Colorado Springs, CO 80962
Likes: *Gunsmith Cats, The Tick, Star Wars*

one of them. "Years ago, back before he was a rocky Super-Hero," Brevoort says, using that term once again, "Ben Grimm used to run with the Yancy Street Gang. But Ben left Yancy Street behind for better things. So the gang has continually pranked him ever since as a caustic reminder that no matter how famous he is, deep down inside, he's just another neighborhood schlub like the rest of them."

Dear Jim,

Whatever happened to the Infinity Gems? Huh? Where are they?

David P. Kelly
Panama City, FL

Tom Brevoort again supplies an answer: "Last time we saw the Infinity Gems, they—along with their keeper, Adam Warlock—were over in the Ultraverse. And now that Warlock's returning in a limited series later this year, I wouldn't be surprised to see the gems turn up, too."

Hey,

What's former *Captain America* artist Kieron Dwyer doing nowadays? His artwork was what turned me on to Cap!

And while we're at it, what's former *Justice League* artist Kevin Maguire doing these days?

Jared Driskill
wwfsuperstar@juno.com

Dwyer has been doing things like "Pope Pie-Us" in *Wizard* #81, the now-famous "Preacher" spoof on the old Hostess fruit pie ads. He's also readying a new issue of *LCD* (*Lowest Comic Denominator*), his self-published not-for-the-weak-of-heart tribute to grossness in all its myriad forms. For more Dwyer and *LCD* info, check out http://members.aol.com/lcdbomb on your computer thingee.

Maguire is doing a number of small projects, including a seven-page Batman story for an upcoming DC Halloween project and a "Basic Training" column on facial expressions for a future issue of *Wizard*.

Dear Magic Words,

Can you get in touch with DC Comics and tell them to produce a Green Lantern insignia glow-in-the-dark belt buckle made of green enamel?

Steve Greene
Oxon Hill, MD

I could. But I won't. It's for your own good, trust me.

Oh, yeah. A glow-in-the-dark belt buckle. That'll get you the chicks.

Dear Jim,

I have a few questions for you!

1) I live in North Dakota. Do any famous writers or artists live in my area?

2) Where's a good place for a beginning writer or artist to get started?

3) What's Frank Miller up to these days?

James Jorissen
Rogers, ND

I have a few answers for you!

1) No.

2) Anywhere but North Dakota.

3) About 6-foot-2. Buh-da-bump...ching!

Days like this, I love my job.

Dear Wrizard,

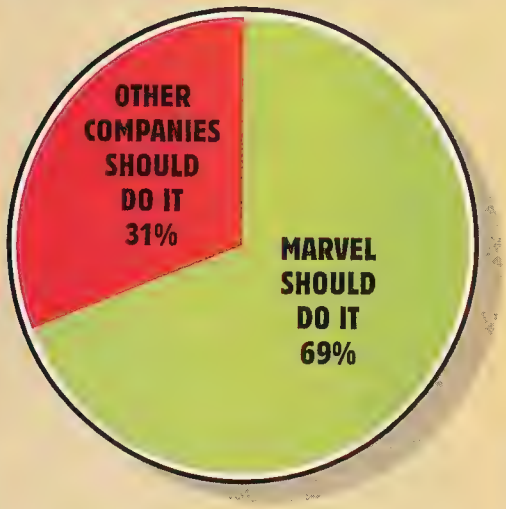
How do you get a job at wrizard? It sounds like a blast!

Mathew Gaastra
Savannah, TN

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

SURVEY SAYS

SHOULD MARVEL PRODUCE ITS OWN TITLES OR HIRE OTHER COMPANIES TO DO IT INSTEAD?



In light of Event Comics' Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti being rehired by Marvel Comics to publish three monthly titles (*Daredevil*, *Inhumans* and *Black Panther*) and a rotating mini-series beginning this September, *Wizard* wanted to know what fans thought of Marvel contracting other publishers—like Event, and Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld—to produce select titles. The majority believed it should be up to Marvel to create all of its comics. "It's a shame that Marvel needs to outsource," said one respondent. "Saying their editors can't handle it means that the House of Ideas ain't full of ideas."

Another fan added, "Instead of falling back on guys who've made their name at Marvel, maybe it should be grooming the next wave of up 'n' comers. Still, I can't wait to read *Daredevil*." ■ MATTHEW SENREICH

KELLY KERLEY
Age: 16 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 222
Benton, IL 62812
Likes: Freefall (*Gen*[13]), *Spawn*, manga

CYNTHIA JONCAS
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Likes: *The Darkness*, *Shadowman*, *Gen*[13]

NOAH MERRIMAN
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Likes. *Spawn*, *The Crow*, *Nightwing*

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Spawn, *Spider-Man*, *Venom*

CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN, 18/M
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Darkness, *Witchblade*, *Spawn*

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Oh My Goddess!, *Gunsmith Cats*

PARKER D. ATTAWAY JR., 26/M
Wolfsfire@aol.com
Nightwing, X-titles, *Wolverine*

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LETTER ART

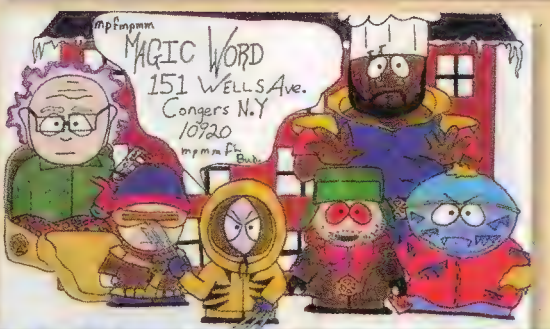
All fans who have their letter art printed this month will each receive a copy of the new *Stargods* comic autographed by creator Scott Clark, plus a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope also scores a signed *Stargods* sketch by Clark! (Thanks tons for the goods, Scott!) ARTISTS: PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, A CLEARLY PRINTED RETURN ADDRESS AND A LIST OF CHARACTERS DEPICTED ON THE BACK OF YOUR ENVELOPE. GOOD LUCK!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

DEADPOOL Brad Williams Brunswick, ME

FANTASTIC FOUR Christopher Stevens Greenville, NC

GRAIL Josef Garcia Manila, Philippines



BEEFCAKE! Larry Butler British Columbia, Canada

It *is* a blast. But the rigorous spell-check test we give at the door would probably disqualify you.

Dear Wizard,

I love *Wizard* so much I will buy you donuts!

Greg Ryan
chicken_magnet@hotmail.com

Nothing says love like donuts. I'll take a Bismarck. And just drop off a box of glazed for the rest of the office, please.

Dear Jim,

I was watching the cinematic classic "The Wizard of Oz" and was wondering: How the hell did they round up all them midgets?

Chris Mulstay
GTarkin@aol.com

Ready to hear about the greatest screw-job of all time? The Munchkins weren't all midgets! According to *The Munchkins of Oz* (by Stephen Cox, Cumberland House, 1966), a man named Leo Singer was hired by MGM to sign up midgets for the Munchkin scenes. Singer lined up 122 midgets (like this one here) and, being unable to fill his quota...about a dozen young children. So "The Wizard of Oz," while still highly entertaining, is *not* 100 percent certified all-midget.

I guess you could say Singer came up a little short.

Whoa, hey! That's enough. I'm getting punchy. Time to go. Enjoy the issue and just love one another. And remember that until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

If he was paid just a little bit more money, Jim McLauchlin would actually write a funny tagline here.

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Congers, NY 10920
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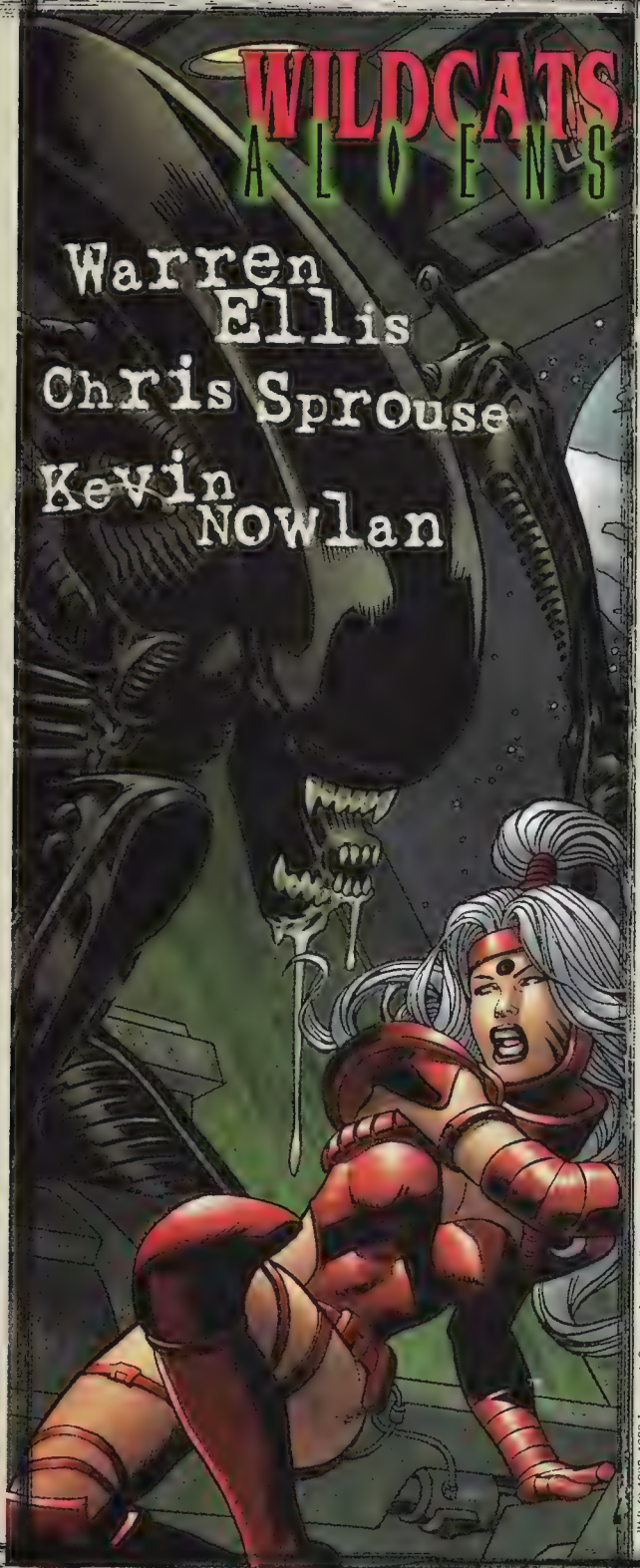

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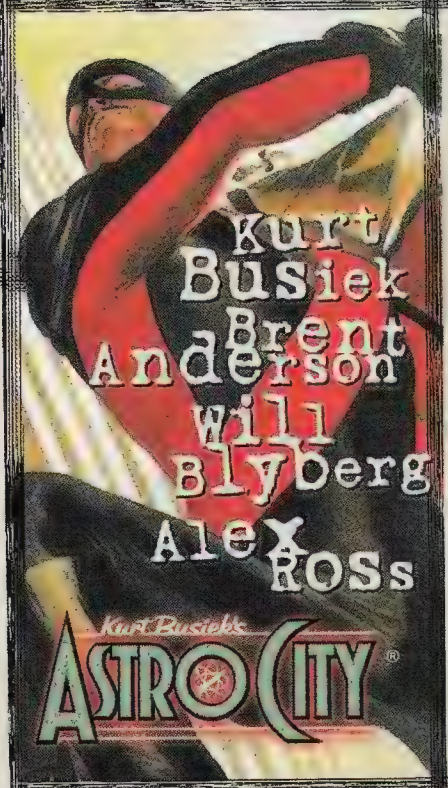

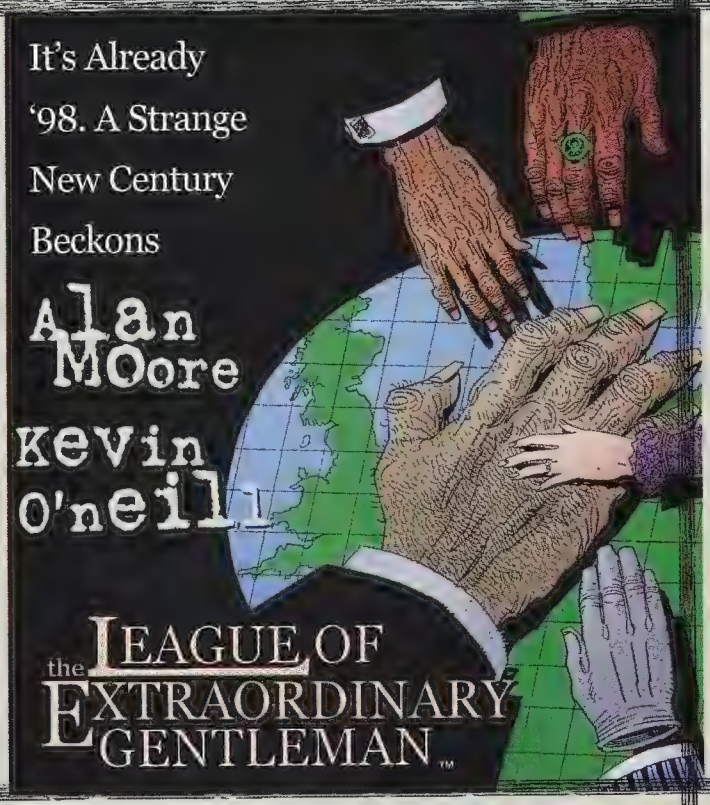

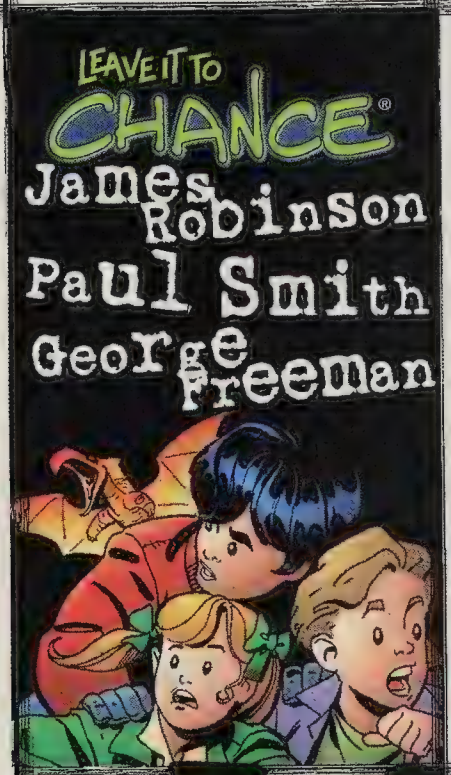

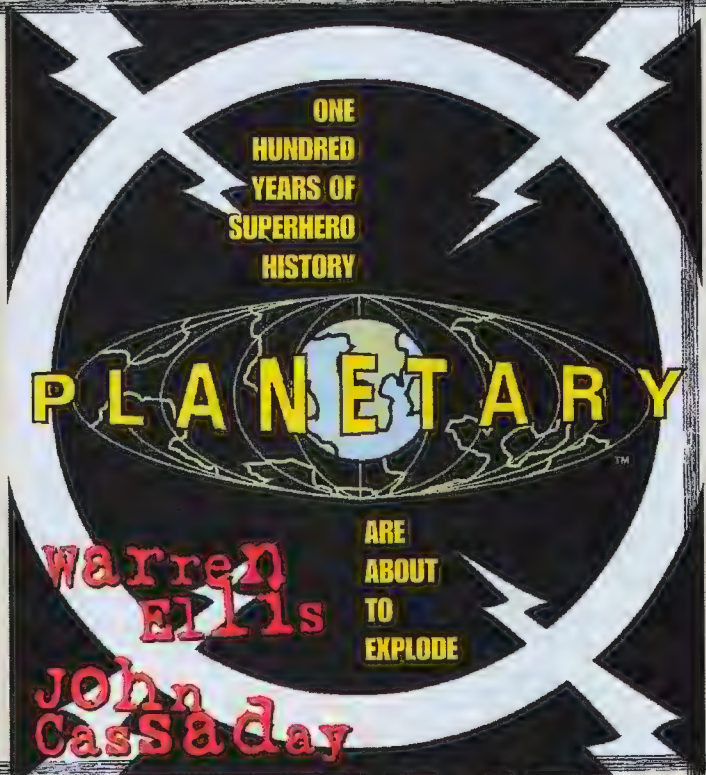

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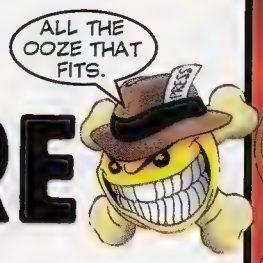


WHERE NOW, TOP COW?

With two new launches and a creative shakeup, Top Cow faces a critical juncture

Top Cow is a company at a crossroads. Since the debut of *Witchblade* nearly three years ago, the Image Comics branch known as Top Cow has been riding high. ***Witchblade***, *The Darkness* and *Ascension* all rank among the top 30 comic sellers—making Top Cow the only non-Marvel or DC publisher to have such a presence. And with only three properties, Top Cow is arguably number three in the industry.

But the next 12 months may determine whether the Image Comics-based studio is ready to challenge Marvel or DC, or slips back to the rest of the publishing pack. From creator departures to new title launches, Top Cow must deal with radical changes that are critical to its future—changes such as:

• Superstar artist **Michael Turner** bolting the ultra-hot *Witchblade* in favor of the creator-owned *Fathom* debuting this July.

• Top Cow owner/founder **Marc Silvestri** hanging up his penciling chores on *The Darkness* to concentrate on multimedia projects such as television, movie and video game deals.

• Legal difficulties surrounding the creator-owned *Ascension* title as a result of the property's co-owner/inker Batt leaving due to creative differences.

• Top Cow nearly doubling its output of monthly titles with the launch of *Fathom* and *Spirit of the Tao* (May).

"I guess you can say we're at a critical juncture," Top Cow President Brad Foxhoven said. "But for us, it's business as usual."

While Top Cow may adopt the "business as usual" approach, the company must address some key concerns:

TAOISM Will *Spirit of the Tao* continue Top Cow's best-selling streak?

Will the launch of two new titles water down Top Cow's line?

In addition to ***Fathom***, Top Cow is also rolling out ***Spirit of the Tao*** by artists Billy Tan and D-Tron. The addition of both *Fathom* and *Spirit of the Tao* in such a short span represents a risky venture. Top Cow is also rumored to be releasing a special comic project at the end of 1998. By expanding and doubling its line in 1998, Top Cow could be accused of cannibalizing its existing audience.

"With expansion, you do it slow. You don't want to flood the marketplace with excessive titles like some other studios have done," Foxhoven said. "We've learned that with titles like *Weapon Zero*, *Cyberforce*, *Nine Volt* and *Arcanum*. Those didn't go to the levels we wanted them to go, so we stopped them. Just like that."

Given its success, can Top Cow keep its talent?

Top Cow hopes so, and is taking definite steps to keep creators from heading to other companies. The company abides by the studio system in which it develops talent in-house, teaches its creators and eventually lets them do their own thing at Top Cow. Projects such as Turner's *Fathom*, the creator-owned *Ascension* and Brandon Peterson's *Arcanum* have emerged from this philosophy.

But sometimes things don't work out, as is evidenced by *Ascension*. David Finch and Batt created *Ascension* for Top Cow, but due to creative differences, Batt ended up leaving after issue #7. Now Top Cow is tied up in legal troubles over ownership of the property.

"Top Cow will continue to publish *Ascension*," Foxhoven said. "The only issue is a matter of credit and some financial consideration. Fans shouldn't worry."

"I'd compare modern day comics with sport franchises," Silvestri said. "You have a bunch of free agents out there with a worth to you and other publishers. What you need to do is make everybody happy. If you can't make them happy, they'll leave. That's the business."

And Top Cow needs to worry about its top notch talent being lured away. Turner was reportedly offered big money to join WildStorm's Cliffhanger line before the *Fathom* deal was struck.

"What keeps me at Top Cow is a sense of loyalty," Turner said. "It's like the Chicago Bulls, with Jordan, Pippen and Rodman. We may not all get along all the time, but we're a team. We bring in rookies, train them and incorporate them into the court time. And my coach thinks I'm valuable and he's looking out for me."

"It's a Catch-22," Foxhoven said. "We help develop these guys. They become really good, want to be successful or get big heads. When they're successful, they want more things and look to other publishers to provide that. That's why we are trying to build a basis for creativity and offer more than money...and I'm talking video games, television, animation and movie deals."

Can Witchblade become the Spawn of the future?

In addition to expansion of the comics line, Top Cow has embarked on a number of multimedia deals including a "Witchblade" television show on TNT debuting in January, an upcoming *Witchblade* video game produced by *Tomb Raider*'s Eidos Interactive and a "Darkness" movie in negotiations. Top Cow is reaching the level of Marvel or DC with animation, video game and movie deals.

"We want people to know the brand name like X-Men or Spawn," Foxhoven said.

To become a brand name like Spawn, Top Cow will have to follow Todd McFarlane's lead and take painstaking steps to ensure that all multimedia efforts are of the highest quality.

"We'll have content and quality in our television projects unlike most that have come before," Silvestri said. "We're proud that TNT is emerging as a major force on TV especially with 'Babylon 5' and now they want to use 'Witchblade' as one of their linchpins."

What's next for Top Cow?

For starters, a second five-year plan is in the works for Top Cow, which was founded in 1992. Silvestri's first five-year plan was capped off by the announcement of the live-action TV deal with TNT.

"My ultimate goal was to have a TV show based on one of my comic properties," Silvestri said. "And I worked back from there, asking myself how would I get there? What do I need? And I was patient."

Patience turned out to be a virtue for Silvestri, as he slowly and steadily built his company while many other small publishers sizzled and fizzled quickly. That "Little Engine that Could" chug-along approach has allowed Silvestri to learn how to make the transition from penciler to owner/businessman/entrepreneur, and has paid handsome dividends.

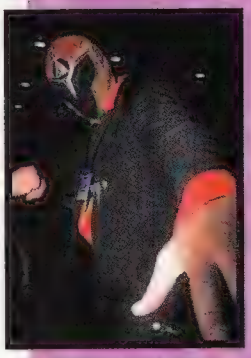
Now Top Cow phases into its second "five-year plan," in which Silvestri hopes to "continue being an influential publisher and bring that into other media."

Will it make the transition? Well, if the first five years are any indication, Top Cow could be well on its way.

"Five years from when we started, I'm exactly where I want to be," Silvestri said. "And now I'm looking to the next five years and I'm thinking, 'What do I have to do to get there?'"

■ MATTHEW SENREICH

SURF'S UP When Turner dives into *Fathom*, where does that leave *Witchblade*?



Inebriated Intel dancer pulls a Sean Penn on an overeager photographer. "Phish off!" the computer-hacking cherub slurred moments before filling his mask with vomit.

Psychic foretells future for comic fan: "You'll die a virgin," scribed shyster soothsayer. "And you'll never find that near-mint copy of Kamandi #3, either. Loser."

Two women found sitting in chairs at local comic con. "Hey, don't photograph us!" said the women.

NEW WRITERS SINK TEETH INTO 'WOLVERINE'

Dezago, Larsen take shots at Marvel's furry madman

Wolverine has seen four writers in the past 12 months, but Marvel Comics is hoping **Todd Dezago** (*Sensational Spider-Man*) and **Erik Larsen** (*Savage Dragon*) can chart a future for the frenetic Canuck.

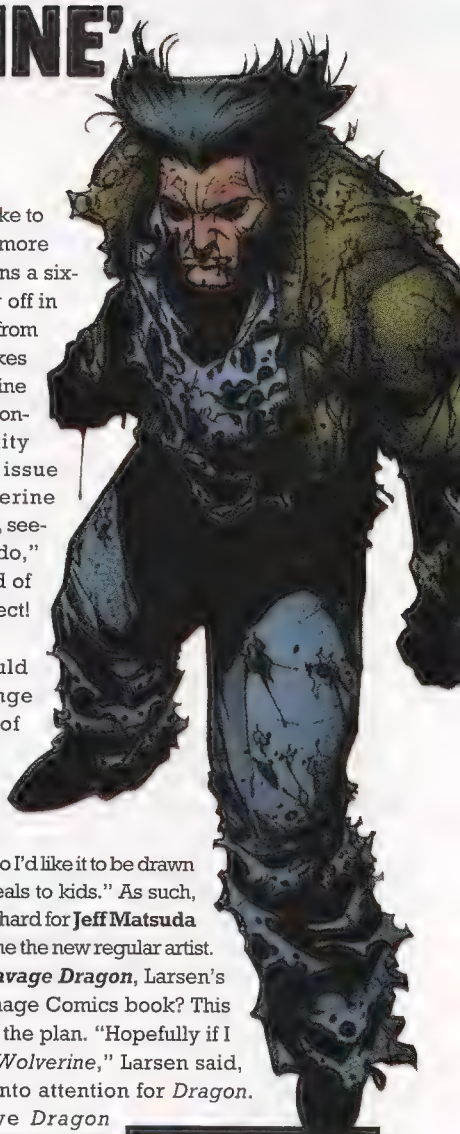
Dezago takes over the title for a four-month swing starting with August's #129 that he plans as "a high adventure thing. Recently, Warren Ellis did grim-'n'-gritty, Tom DeFalco did crime noir and Chris Claremont did feral Sabretooth stuff. I'm not gonna go light, but it won't be that dark."

Dezago hands off to Larsen for December's #133, with what Larsen said is "the understanding that I'm the ongoing guy unless Marvel and I completely can't stand each other."

Larsen also has an adventure-oriented approach for *Wolverine*. "My first priority is to make this a cool comic," he said. "*Wolverine* isn't Wolverine's main book—it's always been *X-Men*. I'd like to make *Wolverine* more vital." Larsen plans a six-issue arc leading off in which an escapee from a prison planet takes control of Wolverine to free Earth's prisoners. "This entity spends the first issue putting Wolverine through the paces, seeing what he can do," Larsen said. "And of course, he's perfect! He can't die!"

Larsen would also like to change the direction of the book's art. "Wolvie skews young. He's the average kid's favorite character. So I'd like it to be drawn in a style that appeals to kids." As such, Larsen is lobbying hard for **Jeff Matsuda** (*Kaboom*) to become the new regular artist.

And what of ***Savage Dragon***, Larsen's creator-owned Image Comics book? This new job is part of the plan. "Hopefully if I get attention on *Wolverine*," Larsen said, "that translates into attention for *Dragon*. I will never give *Dragon* up." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN AND MATTHEW SENREICH**



GRRR Wolverine angry...need... new...pants!

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

LOOK! UP IN THE CREDITS BOX! Word from Metropolis has it creative teams on DC's Superman books will soon be a-changin'. Jerry Ordway (*Power of Shazam!*) might write a title, and on the art front, Doug Mahnke (*Major Bummer*) is looking like a good bet to pencil a Super-book.

JOSEPH REVEALED! Marvel has let slip that the answer of who X-Men mystery man Joseph *really* is, and his connection (if any) to Magneto will finally be revealed in late 1998.

JOSEPH

'STRANGE' DEALINGS AS MARVEL! The Jimmy Palmiotti/Joe Quesada deal at Marvel now has a name: Marvel Knights. Rumored to be the next creator sitting at its Round Table? Acclaimed *Starman* artist Tony Harris, working on a Dr. Strange project.

HART FISHER–STILL ALIVE? Don't bother checking the morgue for the Boneyard Press publisher Hart Fisher...yet. Fisher and buddies pulled off an elaborate April Fools' Day prank (complete with a fake *Los Angeles Times* obituary) that had the comic biz believing Fisher had died. After the prank was revealed, some friends were lookin' to put a hurtin' on Fisher.

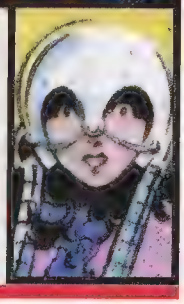
GIRL POWER! Word is that Wonder Woman and Xena are lookin' to team up in a crossover one-shot, but legal wranglings between the media giants that own the properties (Warner Bros. and Universal, respectively) are holding things up.

DEFENDERS ASSEMBLE! The rumor on Bleeker Street is that Dr. Strange (Him again!?) could reunite with the Hulk and Sub-Mariner to reform the original Defenders. And since the name of Jim Starlin (*Infinity Gauntlet*) has been thrown around as a potential writer, you know the consequences will be big.

we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

CE•RE•BRO *(suh REE bro)*, proper noun. 1964-present; **1** mutant-detecting computer devised by Professor Charles Xavier **2** often used by the X-Men to locate new mutants at first manifestation of their powers or to keep track of evil mutants **3** how someone with a thick drawl apologizes to his brother; "Sorry, bro."



oops!

The Dragon Ball Z Venetian blinds shown in "Stuff" in *Wizard* #81 were incorrectly identified as being manufactured by Samurai USA. They are only imported by Samurai USA.

WHERE THE AWESOME BOYS ARE

WHERE ARE THEY?

Awesome Entertainment had done an amazing job assembling talent before last month's announcement that it had lost funding and was forced to suspend all but three books: ***The Coven***, ***Menace*** and ***Re:Gex***. As Awesome looks to resurrect more titles in its line, here's what some of its recruits may do:

NAME	FORMER PLAN	CURRENT PLAN	QUOTE
Jeff Matsuda	Penciling and co-writing *Kaboom*	Possibly penciling *Wolverine*, possibly penciling *Tales of the Darkness*.	"I told Top Cow that if possible, I wanted to have Jeph Loeb writing and Jon Sibal inking with me, just like on *Kaboom*. They seem open to that on *Tales of the Darkness*."
Ed McGuinness	Penciling *Fighting American: Rules of the Game*	Penciling a fill-in issue of *Cable* #58.	"I'm thinking of sticking at Marvel. We're looking at where they want me and where I'd fit in."
Alan Moore	Writing *Glory*, *Supreme*, *Youngblood*	Up in the air. Moore is negotiating to start a small line of three books at WildStorm Productions.	"There was a certain amount of energy at Awesome. I was excited and so were the artists. I don't want to carry over ideas or characters–that was then–but I'd like to carry on that energy."
Brandon Peterson	Penciling *Glory*	Penciling a fill-in issue of *X-Men* #80 to be followed by a probable X-Men mini-series.	"I'd love to do *Glory* with Alan [Moore] if it can come back. There's lots of things still up in the air."
Alex Ross	Painting covers for *Supreme*	Business as usual. Ross continues on the *Superman: Peace on Earth* one-shot for DC Comics.	"I have a desperate need to read *Supreme*. I don't want to see my favorite comic die. If it can survive, I want to do whatever it takes to help it along."
Steve Skroce	Penciling *Youngblood*	Possibly penciling a new *Gambit* ongoing at Marvel.	"The only thing I've talked about at Marvel is the contract aspect, but I'm still in a deciding phase."
Jim Starlin	Writing the four-issue *Fighting American: Dogs of War*	Business as usual. Starlin continues on *Hardcore Station* for DC.	"I wrote three issues [of *American*] and got paid for every page, so I'm in good shape. I know it's been partially drawn and looks great. I'm hoping it can be published. It's a story I really want to tell." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

REVAMPED TITANS TAKE ON THE JLA

Conflicted Flash gets caught between the teams

The new ***Titans*** ongoing series featuring the five original **Teen Titans**—Dick Grayson (Robin, now Nightwing), Wally West (Kid Flash, now Flash), Roy Harper (Speedy, now Arsenal), Donna Troy (Wonder Girl) and Garth (Aqualad, now Tempest)—beginning in January will start with a bang.

A three-issue ***JLA vs. Titans*** mini-series debuts in October to get the ball rolling, penned by *Titans* writer **Devin Grayson** with art by **Phil Jimenez** (*The Invisibles*). Grayson said, "It'll showcase almost everyone who's been a Titan and almost everyone who's been in the Justice League."

As everyone gets fit in, the **Flash** will be looking for *where* he fits. "A worldwide crisis hits, so we bring everyone on stage that we possibly can," Grayson said. "Flash is a key character in the story. When the crisis starts, he has a serious decision to make." That's because by issue #2, the two teams are battling against each other. Flash gets a unique point of view, having been caught in the middle of two teams. The distinctions between the groups are important to the series, Grayson said. "The JLA is a team, and they are incredibly professional and focused," she explained. "The Titans are a family, and they respond in a different manner." ■ **CRAIG SHUTT**

GET READY TO RUMBLE JLA vs. Teen Titans. Who will lose?

X-MEN LINEUP

WHO'S IN? WHO'S OUT?

Marvel has announced that August's big mama-jama **X-Men** crossover will result in a firmed-up X-Men team that will last into 1999. Seven members become "official" X-Men in August, with one additional member joining in September.

While the lineup card is still a deep, dark secret, *X-Men* writer **Joe Kelly** did provide speculation as to which X-Men might make the cut. *Wizard* provides the odds.

NAME	QUOTE	ODDS
Wolverine	Kelly said, "He's the best fighter in the bunch. But he's been having personal problems. If he sticks around, he'll have to make up his mind and not be wishy-washy about whether he belongs in the X-Men."	Even. C'mon! Wolverine is the X-Men's franchise player! He's a lock.
Cyclops	"He's still suffering from that gut wound that Bastion gave him [in *X-Men* #69]. But, with Charles Xavier missing, *someone's* got to carry the torch of Xavier's dream."	2-1. Every team needs a leader and Cyclops has been the X-Men's most consistent frontman.
Phoenix	"She's currently undergoing something of a rebirth and experimenting with her powers. And the team needs a telepath…"	2-1. She's also married to Cyclops. If Cyke is there, Phoenix will follow.
Rogue	"She's a powerhouse. If we continue to see Rogue, she'll be a wild card and she'll not be afraid to use her powers to the fullest."	3-1. Kelly's partner, *Uncanny X-Men* writer Steven T. Seagle, has openly stated an interest in exploring Rogue's personality and powers.
Storm	"She's got personality to match her powers. Just like the weather, she's always changing. But do you want a person who goes through all those explosive mood swings?"	3-1. We think so. Storm is a long-standing member and ties in well with Marrow.
Marrow	"You keep your friends close and your enemies closer. No one knows where Marrow's loyalties are, so the X-Men may want to keep an eye on her."	3-1. She's got unresolved feuds with both Wolvie and Storm that will have to be played out.
Colossus	"He's been an X-Men ally and enemy. How will his loyalties play out now that Xavier is missing?"	5-1. When *Excalibur* ends in August, former member Colossus needs a home. Hello, X-Mansion.
Nightcrawler	"It's logical for him to head back to the X-Men. But having led Excalibur, would he cause power-structure problems for the team?"	5-1. Seagle announced at WonderCon that if any Excalibur member would return to the X-Men, this elf's the one.
Gambit	"He got left in Antarctica [*Uncanny X-Men* #350]. It's not easy to hitchhike your way back."	15-1. Yeah, but he's at the center of many unresolved questions that could make for great stories. Still, we don't think Gambit makes it back immediately.
Beast	"He could fill the teacher role since the Xavier School is currently lacking one. And he's comic relief."	15-1. Maybe, but we know the *Avengers* creative team *reeeeally* likes this former Avenger.
Dr. Cecilia Reyes	"It's always good to have a doctor around. Then again, she has real-life goals and wants a normal life."	35-1. Reyes is looking for a way off the X-Men. C-ya, doc.
Kitty Pryde	"She could be comfortable being an X-Man, being an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. or studying at M.I.T. It'd be great to have a young, optimistic member, but maybe the team can't handle that now."	40-1. It seems lately that Marvel wants her in S.H.I.E.L.D. (Ugh.)
Angel	"He has contacts in both the mutant and human worlds. It's tough to maintain both. But his financial resources could really help the X-Men."	50-1. It'd be nice to have his money, but we think Warren Worthington goes back into the business world for now. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

HOLGUIN TAKES OVER AS 'SPAWN' CO-WRITER

"*Spawn* has been like an oil tanker," **Brian Holguin** said. "It's moved in big, wide arcs. I want to make it more like a speedboat."

Holguin, current writer of the red-hot *KISS: The Psycho Circus*, will get a chance to do that as he becomes the co-writer of industry juggernaut *Spawn* with June's #75, taking some of the burden off Spawn creator **Todd McFarlane**.

"I've got a thousand things going on," McFarlane, who's heavily involved in "Spawn" movie and TV projects, said. "I'm not 100 percent focused on writing, so I'd rather bring someone in who can be focused. And Brian's been doing a great job on *KISS*."

The job came unexpectedly when Holguin was trolling for other work. "I called Todd and asked about doing a *Medieval Spawn* mini-series," Holguin said. "He said, 'How 'bout you just work on *Spawn*?' I was floored."

Holguin promises quicker resolutions to stories now that he's involved and a change in the status quo. "Spawn's world view is based on what Malebolgia told him," Holguin said of the creature that gave Spawn his powers. "But there's no reason to believe this demon would tell Spawn the truth."

So as the book changes, does control change? Not according to Holguin. "Todd's always going to have his influence and rightly so," he said. "He's thought the whole story out in depth. No matter what, Todd's vision guides the book."

The boss, quite naturally, agreed. "*Spawn* is my baby. I'll never sever my ties with the book," McFarlane said. "But I've got to move in other directions too. By year 2000, we'll be consistent across the board in Spawn's presentation in movies, TV and comics." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

'SPX ANTHOLOGY' IS A BIG DEAL

Talk about bang for the buck. SPX Publishing stretches comic readers' dollars to the tune of 300 pages for $4.95 this August, as the second annual ***SPX Anthology*** is released. Proceeds benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, and readers benefit by discovering a wealth of new small-press talent.

SPX spokesman Chris Oarr said he sees the book as a way "to introduce readers to stuff they might not typically encounter. Someone might pick it up due to the **Charles Vess** story, and encounter Tom Hart or Robert Gregory."

This year, at least 44 creators—including Vess, **Jeff Smith** (*Bone*), **Mark Crilley** (*Akiko*) and **Alex Robinson** (*Box Office Poison*)—are on board. Oarr believes creators attach themselves to the project because it's charity work, with a return. "Contributors can support the Fund and display their work to a wider audience." ■ JAKE ROSSEN

GOD FODDER! Big-name creators like Charles Vess and Jeff Smith contribute to the *Small Press Expo Anthology*.

a souvenir of your "DARKEST daYS."

win Stabbing Westward artwork autographed by Dave McKean!

Snag your very own cover art press proof for Stabbing Westward's new album "Darkest Days" – a collector's item signed by artist Dave McKean (Arkham Asylum, Sandman, Fear Factory).

Here's How To Enter:

1) NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Void where prohibited or restricted by law.
2) To enter, put your name, address and daytime telephone number on a 3X5 postcard and mail it to Stabbing Westward Contest c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0188. Only one valid entry per household is eligible.
3) Contest is valid from June 1st to July 31st, 1998. All entries must be received by August 5th, 1998. Winner will be picked at random on/or about August 10, 1998 by Wizard Entertainment. Winner will be notified by phone.
4) (1) Grand Prize winner will receive a signed limited edition press proof of the Stabbing Westward album cover, Darkest Days, and a Sandman Dustcover estimated value is $525. Runners-up (10) will receive a copy of the Sandman Dustcover and a copy of the new album by Stabbing Westward, Darkest Days. Total value of each runner-up prize is $41. Total value of all prizes is $935.
6) Contest is open to all residents of United States. Must be 18 years or older.
7) Odds of winning the all prizes determined by the number of entries. Not responsible for lost or misdirected mail.
8) Employees of Sony Music Entertainment, Wizard Entertainment and D.C. Comics, their affiliates and families are not eligible.
10) All interpretations of the rules and decisions by Wizard Entertainment is final.
11) Winners are responsible for all taxes on prizes, if applicable.
12) For a complete list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Winners List c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0188.

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AARDVARK-VANAHEIM
July's *Cerebus* #232 starts **Dave Sim**'s next big (Thirty-four-issue!) story arc.

ABSTRACT STUDIO
July's ***Strangers in Paradise*** #16 features a special fantasy look at the cast, where Francine's a warrior princess, Katchoo's her feisty sidekick, David's an incompetent warrior wannabe and Tambi's an evil queen.

AC COMICS
Femforce: Origins is getting reprinted in a trade paperback, showing readers the fan ballot-influenced story of whether Ms. Victory accepted Paragon's marriage proposal.

ANOTHER BAD CREATION
Joe Quesada (*Ash*) and Dark One (*Animal Mystic*) provide the variant cover to July's *Jazz Super Star* #1.

CHAOS! COMICS
Lady Death: Retribution is a July one-shot by newcomers Jesse McCann and Jack Jadson.

CHECKER COMICS
Vegman #3 lunges into comic stores in July and continues the ongoing story of the hero's stunning choice to become a vegetarian and to stop evildoers.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
Writer **Steven T. Seagle** (*Uncanny X-Men*) has donated the entire $1,000 signing fee he received for autographing *ToyFare*'s Guardian action figures for retailer Another Universe to the Fund. If you wanna be like Steve, grow a goatee. If you can't, send money to: CBLDF, P.O. Box 693, Northampton, MA 01061.

COMPASS COMICS
Longtime *Detective Comics* penciler **Graham Nolan** ventures into the creator-owned arena with the lighthearted action-adventure romp *Monster Island*, available in late 1998.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT
Alex Ross (*Kingdom Come*) paints the cover to June's *Heaven and Earth* trade paperback, reprinting the four-part mini-series and five-page preview.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

DARK HORSE COMICS
The seven-issue *Red Rocket 7* rockets into trade paperback format in July.

CHAOS! REIGNS AT MARVEL IN OCTOBER

Redesigned characters planned for Halloween project

"I'm not the crossover king," **Chaos! Comics** publisher and creator **Brian Pulido** said. "But this is the coolest sandbox I could ever play in."

That's **Marvel Comics'** supernatural sandbox. Pulido and other Chaos! creators, known for their modern horror tales, take over Marvel's **Ghost Rider**, **Brother Voodoo**, **Black Cat**, **Satanna**, **Werewolf** and **Gargoyle** in a weekly, four-issue October mini-series called ***The Supernaturals***. "And we're doing ground-up redesigns," Pulido said, "to make sure it reeks Halloween in every panel."

Pulido has a free hand to remake Marvel's scary characters for this *What If?*-style series. "We're bustin' hump to make these guys cool and vital for the millennium," Pulido said. "Some may think these guys are fifth-stringers. But to us, the horror guys are special. We want to breathe new life into them." Pulido promises new looks for everyone except Ghost Rider, where back-to-basics is the plan. "He's a flaming skull in a leather jacket on a motorcycle. I've racked my brain. I can't top that."

The Supernaturals stems from a prior event where all of Marvel's "normal" heroes were mysteriously swept off the Earth. Now, 13 years later, the same circumstances that led to the event are occurring again. Marvel's supernaturals, of course, try to bring the heroes back. The series is plotted by Pulido, scripted by Marc Andreyko (*The Lost*) and drawn by Ivan Reiss (*Lady Death: Dragon Wars*). **Jim Balent** (*Catwoman*) supplies cover art.

Pulido also has an open door to bring a Chaos! character into the mix, but is hedging on whether or not to do it. "The '70s supernatural Marvels are some of my favorite comics," he said. "I don't know if it would be appropriate."

And the redesigns? Will they stick? "At the end of the day, it's Marvel's call," Pulido said. "If we've done our job well, they will." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

STAR OF THE FUTURE?

Famed comic colorist **Brian Haberlin** (*Spawn*) and art veteran **Whilce Portacio** (*Iron Man*) launch **Avalon Studios** in August with their collaborative project, ***Stone***, the story of an actor drawn into a comic book unreality. Avalon follows with ***Hellcop***, by writer **Joe Casey** (*Cable*) and art newcomer Gilbert Monsanto in October, which tells the tale of a man who patrols the gate between Hell and Earth.

PENCIL PUSHER Is newcomer Jay Anacleto the next Alex Ross?

That's followed by the December debut of ***Aria***, about a woman who runs a curio shop where real gods and goddesses like Zeus and Hera hang out. Haberlin writes, and art (shown here) is provided by Filipino newcomer Jay Anacleto.

"I got some old samples of his work from a friend," Haberlin said. "They looked intriguing, so I gave him a call. The new stuff he sent me was stellar."

So stellar that Haberlin is using technology to bring a different look to Anacleto's work. "There's no way in Hell I'm gonna have someone ink his pencils," Haberlin said. "They're too beautiful. So I'm going direct to color for a cool, Alex Ross kind of feel."

Comic art is a long way from Anacleto's previous profession: Dentistry. "We're saving him from root canals and impacted molars," Haberlin joked. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

BATMAN ENTERS 'NO MAN'S LAND'

Post-earthquake Gotham goes from bad to worse

Think things couldn't get worse for **Gotham City** following "**Cataclysm**"? Think again.

Come January, ***Batman***, ***Detective Comics*** and ***Batman: Shadow of the Bat*** embark upon the year-long "**No Man's Land**," a story destined to change the face of Gotham and the Bat-books forever.

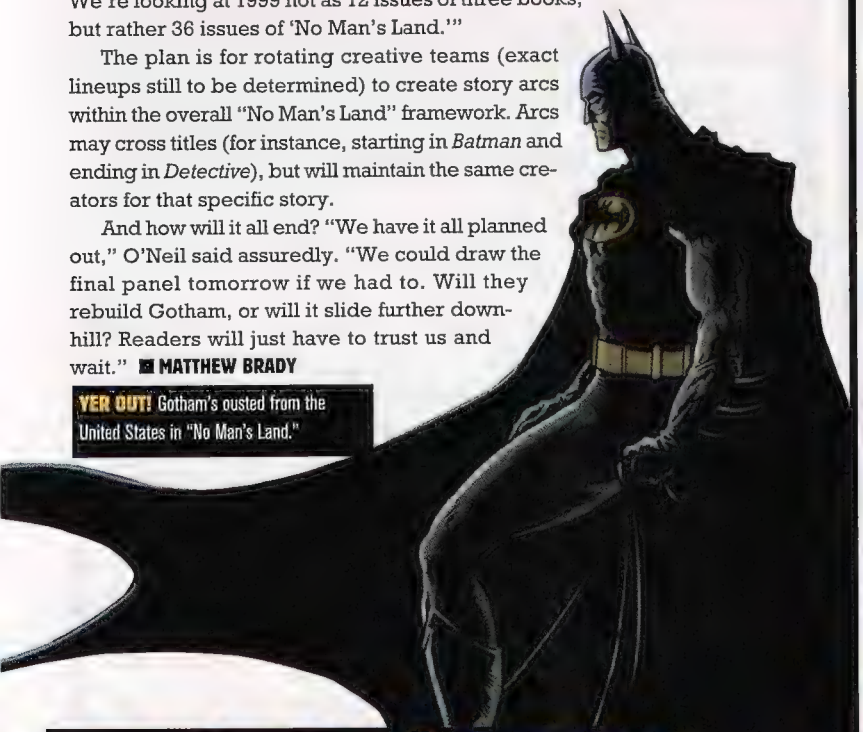
The overall idea—as proposed by Jordan Gorfinkel, DC associate editor—is that due to crime, the Clench plague (from 1996's "Contagion" storyline), and an overall decrepit state, the federal government refuses disaster aid to Gotham after the "Cataclysm" earthquake. Worse yet, the government issues an ultimatum: Everyone who wants out of Gotham has 24 hours to leave. After that, the bridges and tunnels will be blown up, and Gotham will officially be declared No Man's Land—no longer part of the United States.

According to Batman Group Editor **Denny O'Neil**, "No Man's Land" will bring about massive changes in the Bat-books, with both characters and creators leaving.

"There are going to be more changes in the next one year of Batman than I've overseen in my 10 years here," O'Neil said. "Everything about these core Batman books will be different—creators, art, layout, colors, logos, everything. We're looking at 1999 not as 12 issues of three books, but rather 36 issues of 'No Man's Land.'"

The plan is for rotating creative teams (exact lineups still to be determined) to create story arcs within the overall "No Man's Land" framework. Arcs may cross titles (for instance, starting in *Batman* and ending in *Detective*), but will maintain the same creators for that specific story.

And how will it all end? "We have it all planned out," O'Neil said assuredly. "We could draw the final panel tomorrow if we had to. Will they rebuild Gotham, or will it slide further downhill? Readers will just have to trust us and wait." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**



YER OUT! Gotham's ousted from the United States in "No Man's Land."

contest winners

LUCKY STIFFS

• Lisa Casabona of Levittown, N.Y. got to hang and bang at the Orlando Megacon as part of her all-expenses-paid trip she won in *Wizard* #78's "**SO YOU WANNA GO TO MEGACON?**" contest. All we got was this lousy T-shirt.

• Shiloh Hayford of Rochester, Minn. strolled off with all 11 variant covers to *The Darkness* #11, Marc Silvestri original art and a buncha other goodies in *Wizard* #78's "**DARK-ENNIS**" contest!

• And Marquis White of Farmington Hills, Mich. got a new video game system, a *Duke Nukem 3D* game and lots o' other swag in *Wizard* #79's "**DUKE NUKEM**" contest!

The book will also contain an all-new 16-page gallery of rock portraits by **Mike Allred**. *Sergio Aragonés' Boogeyman*, a four-issue mini-series telling titanically terrorific tales, will debut in June.

DAY ONE COMICS
The **Brothers Hildebrandt** contribute a cover to *Astounding Space Thrills* #2 in July.

DC COMICS
June's *Resurrection Man* #16 crosses over into the same month's *Supergirl* #24. **John Francis Moore** (*Chronos*) and Kieron Dwyer (*Action Comics*) collaborate on *Superman: The Dark Side*, an "Elseworlds" tale where baby Kal-El lands on Apokolips. Look for it in August.

IMAGE COMICS
• HIGHBROW
July's *Savage Dragon* #51 has absolutely *no* Savage Dragon in it! She-Dragon takes center stage.
• TOP COW COMICS
Tales of the Darkness #3 in July takes us back to the Spanish Inquisition and Michelangelo Estacado, one of Jackie's forefathers.
• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
Randy Queen's *Darkchylde* #1, shipping in August, kicks off the new bimonthly series. August's *Wild C.A.T.s/Aliens* one-shot by **Warren Ellis** and Chris Sprouse sees some major ramifications in the WildStorm Universe. **Joe Chiodo** fans should check out his 48-page, fully painted *The Mechanic* one-shot this August.

KITCHEN SINK
Bow down to comic book wizard **Will Eisner** and his all-new graphic novel *Family Matter*. Eisner's July-shipping book details a sordid 24-hour period in a family's existence. **Paul Chadwick** (*Concrete*) and John Nyberg contribute story and art for July's *The Spirit: The New Adventures* #5.

LIAR COMICS
Liar Comics is releasing a long-awaited, bimonthly spinoff of *More than Mortal*, entitled *More than Mortal: Sagas*, in August.

MORE THAN MORTAL: SAGAS

ENNIS AND ELLIS HOPE TO ELECTRIFY 'HELLBLAZER'

DC's Vertigo office is hoping interest in *Hellblazer* will spark when two heavyweight industry writers come aboard. **Garth Ennis** (*Preacher*) and **Warren Ellis** (*Transmetropolitan*) are set to tackle the tales of urban magician John Constantine when current scribe **Paul Jenkins** ends his three-year run this summer.

HELLUVA GUY John Constantine, *Hellblazer*'s magic man.

Ennis' five-issue story, starting this August with #129, involves two generations of London gangsters and a glimpse into Constantine's past. Ennis, who previously wrote the title for two years (#61-#83), promises the story will provide the usual share of the shocking horror that has become a *Hellblazer* hallmark.

Ellis, who becomes the title's regular writer with issue #134, said he's taking things in a different direction. "What frightens me is what people can do to each other *without* the help of goblins and such. Most, if not all, of the fantasy aspects of the title will be excised. There will be more real-world cruelty." ■ **SCOTT AUBREY**

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

WITCHBLADE MULTIMEDIA EXPLOSION The successful comic has just been optioned for 11 live-action TV episodes on TNT. And video game maker Eidos Interactive, the brain behind *Tomb Raider*, is planning to create a *Witchblade* video game. You go, girl!

GEORGE PÉREZ Every month on *Avengers* (A *team* book, no less!), penciler George Pérez goes the extra mile to fully render both foregrounds *and* backgrounds. He continues to show today's young artists why they're merely *influenced* by him, and that taking the easy way out with blank backgrounds cheapens their craft.

'SOVEREIGN SEVEN"'S DEMISE Congratulations to DC Comics for finally pulling the plug on this dog. *S7* read slower than molasses, had too many characters, overwritten dialogue and confusing storylines that made our head spin. Thanks for putting this series out of *our* misery.

THUMBS DOWN

SUPERMAN'S 'RETURN' Just when we thought Superman couldn't get any worse, enter *Superman Forever*. Okay, Supes is back in his classic costume. But can anyone explain *how*? Superman Red and Superman Blue just merged and turned into the old Superman? And everything's back to normal now? Ugh. The only thing worse than bad stories are non-stories.

MARVEL MANGA *X-Men: The Manga* and *Spider-Man: The Manga* cost a hefty $2.99 each. That's for reprinted artwork from Japan. In *black and white*. A $2.99 price tag screams "rip-off" on either side of the Pacific!

JIM VALENTINO Good intentions aside, Image partner Jim Valentino's decision to publish 19 small-press books at Image was a classic case of biting off more than one man could chew. Now that Valentino's tanked the line, many of these small-press books may end. At the least, 19 creators are without a publisher and perhaps a comics future. ■

KUBERT SCHOOL EXPANDS ITS HORIZONS

Want to take classes at the prestigious **Joe Kubert School of Cartoon & Graphic Art**, but can't get to New Jersey? Your transportation problem has just been solved.

Legendary comic artist and teacher Joe Kubert has created a series of correspondence courses titled **Joe Kubert's World of Cartooning** that teach the comic art fundamentals through the mail.

Students learn through five lesson plans in each of five initial courses: Penciling, Inking, Superheroes, Horror and Story Graphics. Each course gets students a 32-page, 11" X 17" workbook and a half-hour video explaining how to hold a brush, how to set up a page and any other information pertinent to that particular class.

"You look over the tape and the workbook, then do the homework involved," Kubert said. "You then mail the homework in, it's critiqued by a professional and sent back."

Kubert, his sons **Andy** (*Captain America*) and **Adam** (*Incredible Hulk*), **Tom Mandrake** (*Spectre*) and other professional comic artists will grade the assignments. The turnaround rate for one course will be approximately six months.

Course books are available in September. The plan is for Joe Kubert's World of Cartooning to eventually contain 25 courses, which should be a bit more laid-back than full-time schooling.

"The difference between this and the school," Kubert said, "is that you could use the correspondence course to simply satisfy your urge to learn the basics of cartoon and comic art from professionals at your own pace without having to apply the skills to become a professional."

Each course will cost between $300 and $400. For more information, call (973) 361-1327 or write: Joe Kubert's World of Cartooning; 37 Myrtle Ave.; Dover, NJ; 07801.

■ MATTHEW SENREICH

HALLOWEEN HOOTENANNY!

FREAKS 'R' US

Halloween? What the? But it's not even summer yet! Yeah, yeah, we know Halloween's months away. But the seventh annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest is underway, and we want you to stop slackin' off and enter! Where else can you dress up like your favorite character and show the comic world what a nutcase you are? And heck, if we pick you as our Grand Prize Winner, you'll take home a prize so funky fresh, we can't even tell ya what it is yet. But trust us, it's really, really big (kinda like the Statue of Liberty) and it'll make all of your friends insanely jealous. And yeah, there'll be a buncha Runner-Up prizes too, just in case you get beat out for the *numero uno* spot.

Anyway, here's what you gotta do:

1) Dress up like anyone (or anything) you want– a comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original your getup, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to accent your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Batman mask for your Batman costume, but you can use real playing cards for your Gambit costume. Get it?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of the character you're dressed as on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (Don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses in case some pictures suck. And remember that magic five-letter word: "focus."

4) To be eligible to win, **we must receive your photo by August 3, 1998**, so get sewin'!

Send your entry to:

Costume Contest 7
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Last year's winner, Kelly Delcambre (who made this awesome Hawkman costume his pal Jeff Roberts, shown at left, is wearing) won a gaggle o' goodies including a Wolverine statue, a majorly kick-ass Frankenstein statue, a Super Nintendo (with tons o' game cartridges), a Hulk laser-sculpture, a Joker model kit, an X-Men video and tons more.

MORE DETAILS NEXT ISSUE!

LONE STAR PRESS
July's *Pantheon* #2 holds a handful of short stories by creators including **Chris Sprouse** (*Supreme*).

MARVEL COMICS
Jon J Muth (*Moonshadow*) becomes the ***Silver Surfer*** ongoing artist with August's #144.

PENTHOUSE COMIX
Penthouse Comix is no longer in business; the last *Penthouse Comix* issue was May's #31.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Poison Elves #37 in July features a tale from writer/artist **Drew Hayes** where Lusionur and Jace escape from Mandratha.

SOUTH JERSEY REBELLION PRODUCTIONS
South Jersey introduces a new fantasy-oriented comic in August titled ***The Travelers***.

TOPPS COMICS
Xena: The Wedding of Xena and Hercules is a July one-shot available with an **Alex Ross** painted cover or a photo cover.

An unused *Captain America* cover seen in Vanguard's STERANKO SPECIAL in July.

VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS
A *Tales from the Edge: Steranko Special* signed by comic art legend **Jim Steranko** hits in July and retails for a mere $15.

VIZ COMICS
Viz is reprinting 184 pages worth of *Black Jack* in one nifty trade paperback in August. Story and art is provided by the "God of Manga," **Osamu Tezuka**.

LOBDELL FINDS LIFE AFTER THE X-MEN

Former Marvel-exclusive writer relaunches 'WildC.A.T.s'

Scott Lobdell is going wild.

Now that his Marvel-exclusive contract has expired, the former ***X-Men*** and ***Uncanny X-Men*** writer can move beyond the boundaries of Marvel Comics for the first time since 1990. And Lobdell takes full advantage of his new freedom by relaunching ***WildC.A.T.s***, WildStorm Productions' flagship title, in late 1998.

The rebooted *WildC.A.T.s* will feature art from former *WildC.A.T.s* penciler **Travis Charest**, and contain some new members. "I want to bring the original characters back together first," Lobdell said. "And by the fourth or fifth issue, add a few new members." Lobdell is also planning a few other "to be announced" WildStorm projects for late '98 or early '99.

But Lobdell is not completely cutting ties with the company where he rose to stardom: He's writing a three-issue Marvel mini-series titled ***Sunfire & Big Hero 6***, premiering in July. The story focuses on Japanese hero Sunfire's departure from Alpha Flight and his interaction with a new Japanese superteam, Big Hero 6. The series, which will be very manga-inspired and quirky, will eventually tie back into an upcoming *Alpha Flight* storyline. "Everyone needs to do other things eventually," Lobdell said. "Part of the reason I left [the] X-Men was that I felt restricted. But if a project sounds fun, I'm going to do it, no matter who publishes it." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

FRANK MILLER DOES SPAWN!

Famed comic book creator and Comic Book Legal Defense Fund board member **Frank Miller** has donated a massive 30" X 24" piece of art to the Fund featuring his *Sin City* creation **Marv** as Todd McFarlane's **Spawn**. The artwork will be auctioned as a fund-raiser exclusively through the CBLDF's Web page at www.cbldf.org. Bidding starts at $500, and rumor has it that **McFarlane** himself is interested in Miller's art. So bring your checkbook. Bidding deadline is July 1, 1998.

New CBLDF Web auctions will follow approximately every two months, with upcoming artwork donated by **Jeff Smith** and **Terry Moore**. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

SINGING IN THE RAIN Frank Miller donated this soggy Marv-Spawn art to be auctioned for the CBLDF.

BYTE THIS

YUM! YUM!

SURF THE NET!

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Win a page of original ***Concrete*** art by **Paul Chadwick B** (shown at right), an **Offspring** snowboard, an appearance in the comic book ***Desperate Times***, or lots of other cool stuff in Wizard World's "Signs of Fandom" contest.

Just snap pictures of signs and products that *unintentionally* include names of superheroes, comic companies or comic pros. For example, have you ever seen a "Jim Lee Pool Service"? How 'bout a "Lois Lane Travel" or a "Gareb Street" sign somewhere? Take a picture and send it to us.

The best picture will appear in "Byte This" in a future issue of *Wizard*. Other entries will appear on Wizard World Online. Full rules and details will be posted online at http://www.wizardworld.com. And, as pictures roll in, we'll post them online for you all to see and enjoy!

Visit the new, improved Wizard World Online site at keyword: Wizard on America Online or at http://www.wizardworld.com.

CHAT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

Hey! As convention season gets into full swing, Tuesday night chats may change super-quickly. Check keyword: Wizard on America Online frequently for updates!

JULY 28 (Tuesday)

+CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

Move over Calvin and take Hobbes with ya! *Desperate Times* is here. Longtime *Savage Dragon* letterer Chris Eliopoulos is breaking away from the font-pack and starting his own humorous comic book, *Desperate Times*. Meet him online!

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

And speaking of cons, *Wizard* WILL be online during the Wizard World Chicago comic convention for evening chats with our creator guests. And we can keep you up to date via the Wizard E-mailer! To join the FREE Wizard E-mailer, send an e-mail to WizEmailer@aol.com with the subject line "Sign Me Up." ■ **BUDDY SCALERA (WizBuddy@aol.com)**

A BATTLE OF HYPOTHETICAL PROPORTIONS

LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

SABRETOOTH VS. BANE

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'6"	HEIGHT	6'8"
275 lbs	WEIGHT	350 lbs
78"	REACH	80"
Unknown	HOMETOWN	Peñaduro Prison, Santa Prisca
Furry	BACKS	Hairy
Weasel	NEMESIS	Rodent

Sabretooth, the razor-clawed mutant berserker with enhanced senses and an accelerated healing factor. Bane, the criminal mastermind who—when injected with the drug Venom—becomes an incredibly strong, fast and nigh-unstoppable juggernaut (and yeah, the Bane in this battle will be the Venom-injecting one).

Both men have piled up body counts in the hundreds, never back down from a fight and have scored impressive victories over two of the toughest heroes in comics ('Tooth over Wolverine, Bane over Batman).

But that's where the similarities end. While Sabretooth prefers to simply throw himself into a fight and let the blood and guts fly, Bane approaches his battles like he would a game of chess: he'll learn all he can about an opponent, exploit his weaknesses and strike when he's at his most vulnerable.

But how do these two inhuman war machines fare when they take on their toughest opponents to date: each other?

tha winnah... Driven by his calculating mind and fueled by Venom, Bane would have the early advantage over the reckless Sabretooth, but that advantage wouldn't last. While Bane wouldn't even feel Sabretooth's initial wounds, he—unlike his fast-healing mutant adversary—would eventually begin to tire and weaken. That's when Sabretooth is finally able to sever the Venom hose that supplies Bane his enhanced powers. With Bane now tiring, wounded and no longer able to "juice" himself up—Sabretooth is able to administer lethal blows, leaving the mutant battered (though healing) and standing over the bloody meat that was once Bane.

this month's battle drawn by RON LIM and JIMMY PALMIOTTI

Spice Girls

'WIZARD' RANKS COMICS' TOP 10 SEXIEST WOMEN

It's okay to be a supervillain.

Or an alien. Or an interdimensional reconstructed assassin. As long as you make men—those of both fiction and flesh—stop dead in their tracks and wish the Comics Code was a little more lenient in its rules.

They're the sex symbols of comic books, and they come in all shapes and sizes (not to mention colors, species and textures). Now—for the first time here or anywhere—*Wizard* takes a look at the 10 sexiest women to ever grace the comic page.

BY THE *WIZARD* STAFF • ART BY JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER

10 Psylocke

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **UNCANNY X-MEN** AND **X-MEN**

She's Elizabeth Hurley with all the high-energy danger of a Jackie Chan movie. That's about the best way to describe this purple-haired Asian (or, depending on how you look at it, European) telepathic martial artist. Betsy Braddock's not the kind of gal you'd bring home to Mom, but you'd sure want to bring this "Danger Girl" everywhere else.

9 Rainmaker

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **GEN13**

Pocahontas meets "Chasing Amy." That, and she shoots electricity.

Native American Sarah Rainmaker may be one of the more controversial women in mainstream comics due to her alternative lifestyle (*pssst*–she's a lesbian), but that doesn't stop this Gen13er from being a) the perfect Howard Stern guest and b) the kind of girlfriend every single male comic fan on the planet would trade his collection for (yeah, even his X-Men books).

8 Mystique

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **X-FACTOR**

While a sultry Smurf may not rev your engine, there's no doubting the exotic beauty of Raven Darkholme. When not making life miserable for the X-Men, this blue-skinned knockout–in addition to just being her own gorgeous self–can transform into any woman (or guy) she chooses.

7 Witchblade

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **WITCHBLADE**

And you thought the cops on "NYPD Blue" showed a lot of skin (And who would you rather see naked, Sara Pezzini or Det. Andy Sipowicz?). Not leaving much to the imagination, New York cop Sara Pezzini and her magical Witchblade gauntlet prove that as long as you've got a killer bod and pouty lips, it just doesn't matter that your costume looks just like something out of the Cryptkeeper's wardrobe.

6 Storm

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **UNCANNY X-MEN** AND **X-MEN**

What if RuPaul really *was* a woman? Aside from unbreaking the hearts of all those guys who fell in love with him before finding out he used a urinal, you'd have one of the sexiest women alive. Enter Storm. The tall, full, statuesque physique, the ice-blue eyes that melt anything beneath their gaze, the silky platinum hair that falls about her shoulders...all darn good reasons to have Ororo Munroe–the weather-controlling mutant X-Man–on the list.

5 She-Hulk

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **HEROES FOR HIRE**

Throw a gamma bomb at TV's Ally McBeal and you'd either get a lawsuit or a She-Hulk. Standing at an Amazonian 6-foot-7 with the body of a, well, comic book character, hotshot attorney Jennifer Walters proves you can kick the bad guys' butts in battle, put 'em away in the courtroom and look good doing it.

4 Tigra

MAKES OCCASIONAL APPEARANCES IN **THE AVENGERS**

...whoa. Women with this much body hair are usually restricted to East German Olympic teams. Not Greer Nelson. Though her uniquely exotic felinity (and you can be rest assured that that's the first time *that* word's seen print in *Wizard*) makes her seem like an almost taboo object of desire, it's just that sensual trait that makes cat-lovers out of fanboys everywhere.

3 Dawn

REGULARLY APPEARING IN CRYPT OF DAWN

Body by Angie Everhart, makeup by Gene Simmons. The seemingly omnipotent redhead known only as Dawn has been around since the dawn of time (Get it? "Dawn of time"...? Ahh, forget it.) and represents all life and birth. And not only does every fanboy love this muse, but God and the Devil do too! The best part? She appears to you dressed the way you'd want her to look. Who can argue with that?

2 Vampirella

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **VAMPIRELLA**

That's why you never saw Barbara Eden's...you know. Bellybuttons were just too sexy for '60s TV. Not that Vampi's navel is what put her on the chart (though her "waitress in a strip bar" costume shows off a lot more than just her navel). This alien vampire from the planet Drakulon proves that as long as you got it where it counts, you can even make bangs look sexy.

1 Catwoman

REGULARLY APPEARING IN **CATWOMAN**

Yasmine Bleeth, skintight spandex and a whip. While we could probably just leave it at that, there is just so much to say about the perfect form that is Selina Kyle. The laughing green eyes, hair so midnight-black you could lose yourself in it, the crooked smile that lets you know she's not a "nice" girl...all of this combines with her cat-like sensuality and voluptuous figure to make her comics' #1 sex symbol.

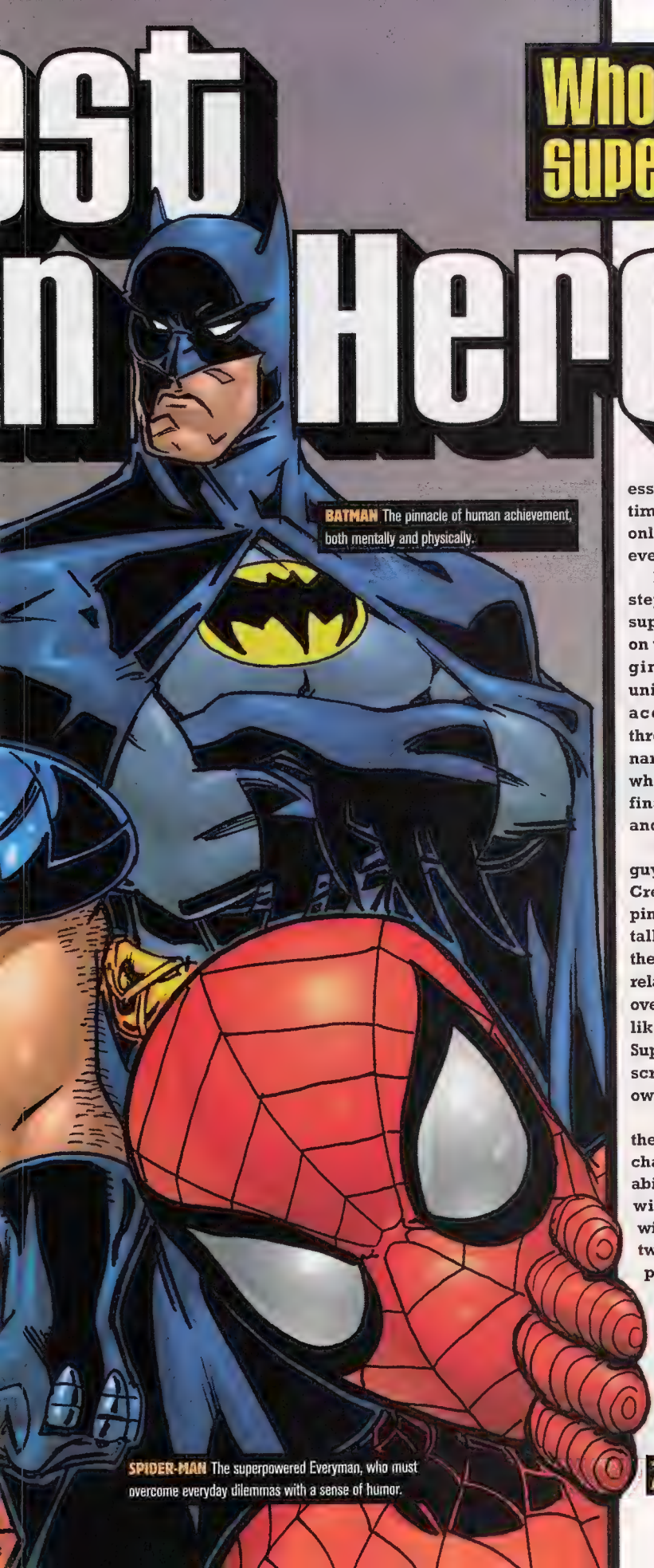
Now back to that Yasmine Bleeth mental image...

The Wizard *Staff performed extensive research to determine who the sexiest females in comics were. Then hit the cold showers and jogged a mile.*

The Great
America
SUPERMAN The ultimate good guy with the ultimate selection of superpowers.
WOLVERINE The anti-Superman who fights bad guys with bad-guy rules.

Who is the best superhero ever?

st n Hero*



BATMAN The pinnacle of human achievement, both mentally and physically.

SPIDER-MAN The superpowered Everyman, who must overcome everyday dilemmas with a sense of humor.

You've had the argument. In the schoolyard. At the arcade. Or in a local comic store. The argument that begins with, "So who do you think's the greatest superhero ever?"

Everybody's got an answer. And it's not necessarily the same one. Well, here for the first time, *Wizard* settles the argument, and not only do we name who the greatest superhero ever created is, but we'll *prove* it.

Here's how we went about it. Our first step was to determine what makes a good superhero. A classic hero's merits are based on the following attributes: an engaging origin, fascinating abilities/accessories, unique costume, dynamic personality and acceptable motivation. Then we went through the tons of existing superheroes and narrowed down our list to four iconic heroes who embody the best of these qualities. The finalists: Superman, Batman, Spider-Man and Wolverine.

Superman represents the ultimate good guy with the ultimate superpower selection. Created by tragedy, Batman symbolizes the pinnacle of human achievement—both mentally and physically. Spider-Man stands for the superpowered Everyman that anyone can relate to; although he has powers, Spidey must overcome his share of personal problems just like you do. And Wolverine typifies the anti-Superman type of hero—an edgy, take-no-crap scrapper who fights the bad guys with their own bad-guy rules.

To determine the best hero, we broke down the judging into five categories based on key characteristics (origin, costume, motivation, abilities/accessories and personality/attitude), with point totals given to rank each hero within each (three points awarded to the best, two for second place, one for third and no points for fourth).

Who will win out in the end? Everybody's got an answer. And here's ours.

By The *Wizard* Staff

Opening art by Mike Wieringo, coloring by Liquid Graphics

*Yeah, yeah. We know Wolverine's Canadian, but he was created in American comics. Now get readin', smart guy.

origin

SUPERMAN
Rocketed from the doomed planet of Krypton, young Kal-El was found in a Kansas field by Jonathan and Martha Kent, who adopted him and named him Clark. Upon reaching maturity, Clark's Kryptonian nigh-invulnerable body became a solar battery, giving him immense superpowers. Using these powers for the benefit of mankind, Clark took on the identity of Superman.

BATMAN
His parents slain before his eyes, young Bruce Wayne (at right) dedicated his life to fighting crime. From ages 13 to 25, Bruce trained his mind and body to their fullest, using his inherited millions to create an identity to strike fear in criminals' hearts as Batman.

SPIDER-MAN
Bitten by a radioactive spider, Peter Parker gained the arachnid's powers to fight crime as Spider-Man.

WOLVERINE
Take your pick. Known only as Logan, Wolverine's mysterious origin is mired in false memory implants and amnesia.

FINAL TALLY
More than any other origin, Batman's is deeply personal and could be a headline in your local newspaper–no rocket ships, no radioactive spiders, no memory implants–just a crime that happens every day in every city.

With the help of comic science, Spider-Man just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time–not something that could happen to anyone, though. Superman's an alien, which throws the slightest human connection out the window. Wolverine's original "mystery-man" origin had a cool mystique to it, but his current convoluted non-origin works against him.

ORIGIN SCORE
Batman: 3
Spider-Man: 2
Superman: 1
Wolverine: 0

costume

SUPERMAN
The model for all that followed. Its bright, all-American color scheme and flowing cape inspires optimism. His trademark "S" crest established the whole chest emblem look.

BATMAN
Dark as night. Batman's spooky design makes him instantly recognizable in the dark and from behind. Designed to strike fear into the hearts of criminals, the suit does its job.

SPIDER-MAN
This suit's got bounce! Aside from a high-energy design, the big eyes and complex webbing motif convey a creepy outcast look.

WOLVERINE
You know exactly what you're in for when you see this scrappy pug coming at you. Pointy mask and boots (and hairy arms) accent his feral, animalistic appearance.

FINAL TALLY
The eyes have it! Those spooky, cool eyes of Spider-Man's mask and his web motif make his the best of the bunch, mainly because it's the most interesting to look at.

Batman's simple costume design makes his outfit cool, but you're not gonna stare at it as much as Spidey's. Wolverine's conveys feral... until you figure out that blue and yellow aren't really feral colors. Superman's suit might be a brightly colored classic, but "classic" in the sense that it doesn't look as modern as the others.

COSTUME SCORE
Spider-Man: 3
Batman: 2
Wolverine: 1
Superman: 0

motivation

SUPERMAN
Once he discovered his powers, Clark Kent used them for personal gain, winning football trophies and the like. But using his Midwestern morality, Clark decided that after graduating high school, he should use his gifts responsibly and share them with the world.

BATMAN
His origin *is* his motivation. Batman's parents were murdered and he made a vow to rid Gotham City of all crime.

SPIDER-MAN
"With great power comes great responsibility." When Peter Parker goofed and his uncle was killed because of it, Pete vowed to use his powers more responsibly.

WOLVERINE
Wolverine has no obvious motivation. Sure, he will do what he feels is right. But he just does whatever he wants whenever he wants.

FINAL TALLY
Unlike Batman, Spidey had an opportunity to halt the impending tragedy that would give him purpose, but chose not to. That heavy burden will always force Peter Parker to use his powers responsibly to stop crime as Spider-Man, a connection none of the other heroes have.

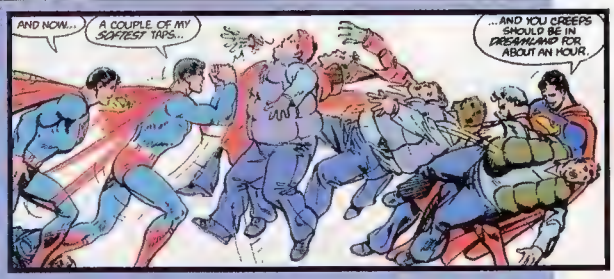
Superman also uses his great powers with great responsibility, but he doesn't have the tragedy to motivate him. Wolverine's motivation is a mystery to us.

MOTIVATION SCORE
Spider-Man: 3
Batman: 2
Superman: 1
Wolverine: 0

abilities/accessories

SUPERMAN (right)

It's more like what powers *doesn't* he have? Supes has super-strength, super-speed, flight, X-ray vision, heat vision, super-hearing and super-breath. His hideaway, called the Fortress of Solitude, is in Antarctica.



BATMAN

Batman's a true super *human.* Having no superpowers, the Dark Knight Detective relies mainly on two things: his Olympian-level body and the cleverest mind of any comic book universe. As a billionaire, he also relies on the complex gadgets his WayneTech company creates (which he secretly secures): his Batmobile, computers and a utility belt which holds smaller gadgets (stuff like smoke pellets, lock picks, grappling hook, etc.).

SPIDER-MAN

He "does whatever a spider can..." The radioactive spider that bit him transferred its natural abilities to Peter Parker. They include the proportionate strength of a spider (which translates to super-strength), the ability to stick to walls, a mental danger alert and a spidery quickness. Spidey also has web-shooters for each wrist that emit a sticky fluid; the fluid can become a variety of things, including: 1) a webline allowing him to swing from building to building, 2) a sticky glop to jam up guns or halt a running villain and 3) a strong-yet-elastic wall or slingshot band. (Useful and fun.)

WOLVERINE

Hack 'n' slash is the name of his game. Aside from his mutant abilities (a regenerative factor and enhanced senses), Logan's most impressive attributes are his adamantium-laced skeleton and claws. (Okay, he doesn't have the adamantium back yet–but since it's such a deeply rooted part of his character, that's what we judged him on.) The unbreakable metal prevents his bones from breaking and his razor-sharp claws can cut through anything–something Wolvie proves with alarming regularity.

FINAL TALLY

Give us a fan who *won't* take Superman's arsenal of abilities. The guy can fly anywhere in a second, beat up anyone he wants and see through clothing. Given a choice between these four characters, who'd turn down Superman's powers??

Batman's abilities are *mucho* desirable because they're attainable–if you study hard and work out to the max, you can actually become Batman. What pushes Spidey's powers and web-shooters over Wolverine's is that Spidey can be a short- and long-range kinda guy, whereas Logan is purely up-close and personal.

ABILITIES/ ACCESSORIES SCORE

Superman: 3
Batman: 2
Spider-Man: 1
Wolverine: 0

personality/attitude

SUPERMAN

The ultimate boy scout. Integrity personified. He'll make infrequent mistakes, and he always does what he feels is right.

BATMAN

Intense. When Batman walks into a room, his mere presence puts even his allies on edge. A relentless control freak, Batman will not stop until the crime is solved.

SPIDER-MAN (left)

The Seinfeld of comics. To contrast Peter Parker's problematic personal life, Spidey's bouncy, comical jousting makes him the most entertaining superhero around.

WOLVERINE

In your face. If Wolverine disagrees with you, he'll not only go his own way–he'll punch you out if you get on his nerves. And if he believes someone deserves to die, Logan'll have no problem doing the job.

FINAL TALLY

Who doesn't wanna have fun when reading comics? Batman is appropriately dark and Wolverine taps the rebel in all of us, but we'd rather smile with Spidey on a regular basis.

And Superman...? Unlike all of the other personalities, the Man of Steel is just too "goody-two-shoes" to relate to.

PERSONALITY/ ATTITUDE SCORE

Spider-Man: 3
Wolverine: 2
Batman: 1
Superman: 0

making them great

Ten things you need to make your superhero not suck

1) NAME–Make a fan want to say your hero's name. Give it a cool, catchy name, but also have it make sense. "Witchblade"? It's about a woman with a clawed gauntlet, and it just sounds cool. "Spider-Man"? Intriguing, and it has a guy with spider powers in it. "Cable"? Okay name, but it doesn't have anything to do with the character.

2) COSTUME–Same as #1: The costume must make sense. Allow fans to instantly make the connection between your hero's name and look.

3) GET A LIFE–Give your characters some personality. Peter Parker (a.k.a. Spider-Man) is a lovable loser who tries to look at the bright side; put him in his Spidey costume and his optimism is seen through his witty sense of humor. Or Batman, whose true personaltity is seen solely when he's in costume; when the Dark Knight appears, his personality is so intense, it dominates everything around him.

4) MOTIVATION–"Why?" Why do characters care enough to put on a costume? Give your characters a reason to do what they do, give the readers a reason to read your book.

5) ORIGIN–Being a mutant sucks. What a lame origin: "I was born this way." That's the easy way out. Give your character a creative start and you're ahead of the game.

6) ABILITIES–Impossible to come up with original abilities these days? Maybe, but that doesn't mean you can't be creative. Go the extra mile and give your character a twist with its powers. Take *Astro City's* Samaritan, a Superman wannabe; what makes him different is that he uses his vast powers constantly. He's always on the go averting disasters, never allowing himself much of a personal life. Or Quicksilver–a Flash knock-off–except he's an impatient, arrogant jerk with his super-speed abilities.

7) ROGUES GALLERY–Your hero is only as good as his villains! Spend just as much time applying these traits to your evildoers as you do your do-gooders! What would comics be without Dr. Doom, the Joker, the Green Goblin and Lex Luthor?

8) SUPPORTING CAST–No man is an island. Same holds true for your creation. Every good book has a Commissioner Gordon, Lois Lane, J. Jonah Jameson or Rick Jones. Help bring your stories to a human level with these guys. Speaking of realism...

9) REALISM–Make the reader forget about the spandex, retractable claws and super-speed. Give your heroes a human edge the reader can truly empathize with.

10) JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER–If you're gonna do an alternate cover to your comic, have this guy draw it. It seems to work *reeeally* well.

your turn!

Who do YOU think is the greatest superhero of all time?

A. Superman
B. Batman
C. Spider-Man
D. Wolverine
E. Other

We wanna know! E-mail us at WizPoll@aol.com to cast your vote. And don't forget to explain WHY you voted the way you did.

the winner: spider-man

FINAL SCORE TOTALS

Spider-Man: 12
Batman: 10
Superman: 5
Wolverine: 3

The best superhero of all time? It's Spider-Man, by a thread of webline. Besides good showings in the five categories presented in this article, Spidey's got a lot more going for him.

He might not have been the first superhero, but Spider-Man changed the way we looked at superheroes. He was the first Everyman superhero with real-world concerns. Peter Parker was a guy who struggled to pay bills; he made mistakes, he sometimes lost his cool and he didn't always have a happy ending. Heck, Pete even sewed his own costumes!

Spider-Man's supporting cast also broke the mold. They added to Peter's roller-coaster life by giving him even more worries and headaches. His boss, *Daily Bugle* publisher J. Jonah Jameson, would publicly skewer Peter's alter ego in his editorials. Bully Flash Thompson would taunt Peter in school. Rival freelance photographer Lance Bannon would constantly beat him out in getting *Bugle* assignments. And then there's the regular supervillain problems when he puts his costume on.

Spider-Man's rogues gallery is the greatest around. Whether it's the Lizard, Rhino or Electro, Spidey's villains have unique powers, are threats that truly challenge Spidey and are a model of simplicity to the point that you can easily match the villain's name to his look.

So now you've heard our argument. You've got our answer. You have our proof. And if you don't agree, we'll meet you outside. With Spidey in our corner.

The Wizard *Staffers now realize they'll get trounced if naysayers have Superman in THEIR corner. Maybe we should rethink this...*

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THE WIZARD Q&A

BY TOM RUSSO • PHOTOS BY MATTHEW J. ATANIAN

Call it the House that Superman Built.

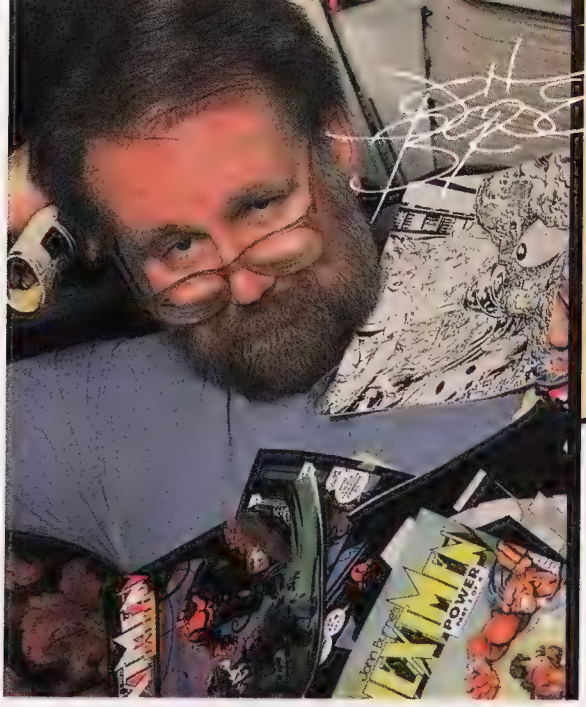
Okay, so writer-artist John Byrne's stint chronicling DC's Man of Steel didn't technically build the stately 1840s Connecticut Victorian house he's lived in for the last 13 years. (You pretty much know you're ringing the right bell when you spot that gleefully curmudgeonly "GO AWAY" doormat.) But Superman certainly paid for the joint.

The place, indeed, stands as a monument to the height of Byrne's creative achievement, at least in terms of fan response. The year was 1986. Byrne, now 47, had just left Marvel for DC after a decade-long run in which he helped make the X-Men THE X-MEN, memorably revitalized the Fantastic Four, and gave Alpha Flight a reason for being. But the Superman assignment was the definition of "high-profile." Byrne effectively rebooted him with the oft-reprinted *Man of Steel* mini-series, then took over the venerable *Action Comics* and relaunched *Superman* with a new #1 issue. He even drew DC's suddenly rejuvenated flagship hero for the cover of *Time* magazine.

So what did he do for an encore? Well, the little treasures that fill his home offer an indirect clue. Any fanboy worth his fan-salt will be quickly sucked in by the reams of framed Jack Kirby originals hanging by Byrne's drafting table. Or Byrne's self-crafted sculpture of the Thing, arms raised high, poised to do some clobberin'. ("Walt Simonson saw it and said, 'Why is the Thing yawning?' Oh, thanks, Walt!") But then he's also got those classical sculptures and Revolutionary War-era prints. In short, Byrne's interests extend well beyond the predictable or the obvious. Which helps to explain why,

The man who reinvented Superman, **JOHN BYRNE**, sets his sights on a Spidey revamp. And there's no one better for the job. Just ask him.

JOHN byrne



VITAL STATS

OCCUPATION: Writer-artist
BORN: July 6, 1950, in England (grew up in Alberta, Canada)
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Connecticut
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Revitalizations-a-go-go: Helped put the new X-Men on the map as penciler and co-plotter of a run culminating with the classic story arcs "The Dark Phoenix Saga" and "Days of Future Past"; revitalized *Fantastic Four* with a five-year run beginning in 1981; revitalized Superman from '86 to '88; revitalized his own take on the "feared and hated hero" genre with his creator-owned *Next Men*, published by Dark Horse from '91 to '94; most recently, has expanded on colleague George Pérez's revitalization of Wonder Woman with, yes, a revitalization of his own that began in '95.

post-Superman, he seemingly was less inclined to seek out the Next Big Thing than the next most interesting thing: the West Coast Avengers. Namor. His own original creation, Next Men, at Dark Horse. Even his main gig for the last three years, Wonder Woman, while a DC icon, still has always had a respect problem. Not that Byrne didn't do his damnedest to change that: "I managed to boost her powers," he boasts, "to the point that I don't think anybody's going to argue that she's number two in the DC universe anymore."

But now comes word that beginning in October, Byrne is diving into a 13-issue mini-series called *Spider Man: Twice Told Tales*, in which he'll literally re-spin the webslinger's classic early adventures. Couple this with the news that he's got another project in the works called *X-Men: The Hidden Years*, and suddenly the guy's name is all over the place again. Byrne goes online and declares that *Twice Told Tales* needs no variant cover-style bells and whistles, because "I *am* the 'gimmick'"—and everyone gets thrown into a tizzy. He talks about how some well-received Spider-Man revisionism "is gonna get *Man of Steel*-ed right outta there," and fans start gritting their teeth like they're modeling for an Image pinup.

For a further look at the Gospel According to Byrne, read on. And hey, if you can't handle it—read the doormat.

WIZARD: Word is that you got the heads-up to do *Twice Told Tales* from *Peter Parker* writer Howard Mackie—who also just happened to be your old editor on *West Coast Avengers*.

BYRNE: Plus, we've been buddies for years. Howard mentioned that [Spider-editor] Ralph Macchio had said he'd like to do some kind of a "Year One" thing. I think Ralph's comment was something like, "'Heroes Reborn' wasn't exactly what we thought it would be—what if we did it right?" And he tossed out my name: "Wouldn't it be cool if we could get John?" And one of the things that was appealing is that I'm not automatically associated with Spider-Man. I'll be "that new guy Byrne who's doing Spider-Man."

And why, uh, tell these tales twice?

The main appeal was to be able to retell those cool Spider-Man stories that I read as a kid. But I also have an advantage over Stan and Steve [original creators Stan Lee and Steve Ditko], in that I know what's going to be in issue #10, issue #100 and issue #300. All those early Marvel stories were very chop-chop-chop, because they were making it up as they went along. I'm able to actually give a sense of cohesion. Plus, they want it updated and tweaked a little bit. It's designed to be accessible to kids who haven't read Spider-Man before.

There's been talk that you're going to be tying in Doctor Octopus' origin with Spider-Man's, that kind of thing.

We're mixing some stuff together. For example, the Chameleon is working for Doctor Doom, instead of the evil Commies—because there *are* no evil Commies now. It's mostly stuff like that, where even the people who are the most anally retentive should be able to read it and not be too outraged.

Now, what about your whole Internet brouhaha with Kurt Busiek? You made a crack about how some of the Spider-Man bridge material he wrote "is gonna get *Man of Steel*-ed right outta there."

Well, every once in a while, I'll discover somebody whose buttons are particularly easy to push—and I'll do it, 'cause I'm that kinda guy. [*Laughs*] But the thing is, the mandate I've been handed by Marvel is [*Grandly*], "John, you're God now—you get to pick what's real and what isn't." Kurt had done a continuation of *Amazing Fantasy*, with stories that took place between the last panel of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 and the first panel of [*Amazing*] *Spider-Man* #1. And for me, there's no gap there.

We hear that in addition to doing *Twice Told Tales*, you're actually going to be collaborating with Mackie on *Amazing* once the Spider-line cuts back to two ongoing books in a few months.

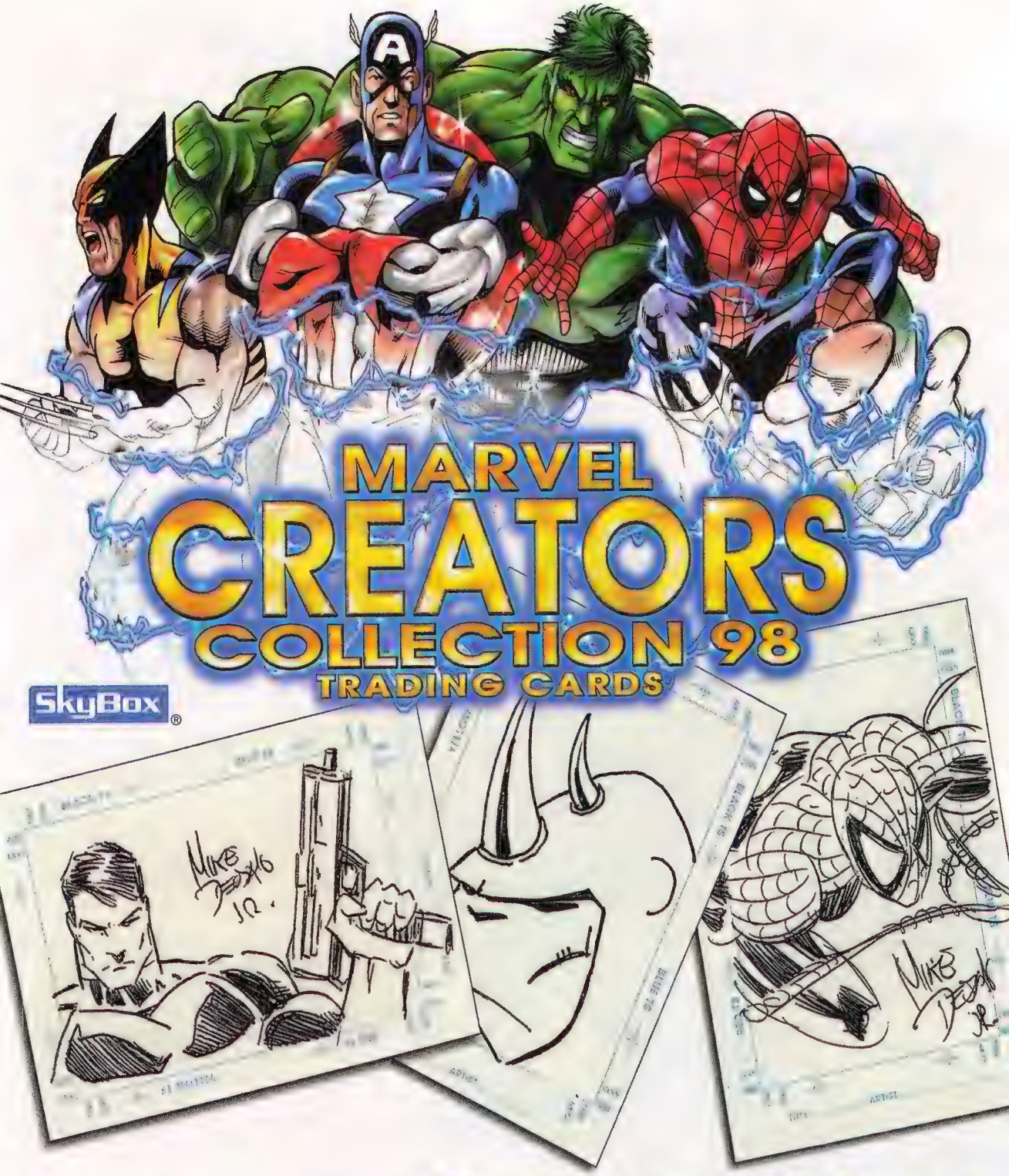
Yeah, and I figure after a year of two Spider-Man books a month, I should be just about burned out, and never want to see a webline again. [*Laughs*] Originally, we had talked briefly about my writing *Amazing* and penciling it. And then Marvel very wisely decided that if there's only going to be two [ongoing] Spider-Man books, let's have one voice writing it. Howard was the senior writer, so they gave it to him. And he and I had been looking for some way we could actually work together in a creative sense rather than just the creator-editor sense, so I said, "Well, what if I pencil *Amazing*?" And that way I'll have input to the regular monthly series. It won't look like I just came and kicked over all the buckets and left.

What have you and Mackie got planned for the book?

We've barely even started, but we want a lot of new villains and new directions. We're trying to rewind to what we thought were the successful elements of the original run of the book, without sacrificing what is perceived as the growth that has happened since.

And what's the lowdown on *Hidden Years*?

Basically, there's a hole in the X-Men continuity—roughly 29 issues, when the book was a reprint [beginning with *Uncanny* #67]. So I said, "Well, let me fill that hole." Not necessarily for 29 issues—it might be 129, for all we know. The X-Men were appearing in other books, so obviously they must have been doing something. We saw



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moments of it: They turned up in their old school uniforms in *Captain America*, we saw Magneto return in *Fantastic Four*...I'm explaining all that. I expect that everything I do will take place before the Beast turned blue, because I don't want to lose him [as he was originally]. And the ultimate end point, of course, is *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 [which introduced the new X-Men].

Any new DC projects coming up now that you're leaving *Wonder Woman* and *Jack Kirby's Fourth World*?

My *Generations* mini-series, where I'm looking at Batman and Superman in real time, from 1939 on up to 2009. And I'm already talking to [DC editor] Paul Kupperberg about things post-Spider-Man. I'm going to be Mister Mini-series, I think. We've talked about Artemis. Hippolyta as Wonder Woman back in World War II. And the Doom Patrol, Hawkman and the Demon. A whole bunch of stuff.

"The mandate I've been handed by Marvel is, 'John, you're God now.'"
–JOHN BYRNE, on his Spider-Man revamp

You've made it clear online that your leaving *Wonder Woman* was a case of your plotlines and your contract winding down simultaneously. But as for *Fourth World*, it's rumored that you're splitting because you didn't want Orion and Big Barda added to the JLA. Doesn't the JLA connection just give your book a boost?

No. That's always the argument, that being in a group book helps the parent title. It's always exactly the opposite. Because a kid thinks, "Oh, New Gods characters are over here in *JLA*, where there are 65 other characters. So I don't have to buy [*Fourth World*] now." The whole thing was that the JLA office was asking for Orion, and Kupperberg and I kept saying, "No, Orion would never join the JLA—that would be dumb." Especially based upon the story they said they wanted to do. And finally, they just overruled us: "No, Orion is *in* the JLA." And kind of like the ultimate insult, they said, "You can come up with a reason for it if you like." And I thought, "I'm already considering leaving the book—[if] I need something to make that final decision for me, well, there it is."

But isn't that a danger that's really just inherent to comics universes? The *Green Lantern* guys seemed to be a little bummed out when Donna Troy moved from their supporting cast over to Wonder Woman...

But Donna technically belongs to *Wonder Woman*, having been Wonder Girl and all that. So actually, we didn't *take* her back—we just said, "We'd like to have her back if you guys aren't using her." And at the time, [*Green Lantern* editor] Kevin Dooley said, "Oh, that'll tie in exactly to what we're doing." And then a year later, they went, "You mean you really wanted her?" [*Laughs*]

Let's talk for a minute about Legend, the creator-based imprint you, Frank Miller and others organized at Dark Horse. What's its status right now?

Frank quotes [fellow comics pro] Jo Duffy, who said, "It didn't take long for Legend to turn into myth." [*Laughs*] It was a good idea—an imprint within a larger company, so the larger company buffers the imprint—it just didn't quite work. It turned into exactly what I was afraid it was going to, which was a bunch of announced books that never came out.

So is it no longer a going concern?

Well, I know Frank's not using the icon anymore, I don't think Mike Mignola

ENCORE PERFORMANCE Will Byrne revamp Sandman (shown here) and other classic Spidey villains?

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BYRNE, HOLLYWOOD, BYRNE!

John Byrne, a guy notorious for creating by autonomy. Hollywood, a town notorious for creating by committee. Throw them together and you get...a match made in sadomasochistic heaven?

Surprisingly, Byrne has actually had a number of dealings with the entertainment industry over the years, professionally, indirectly, and otherwise. What follows is a look at the characters who've been involved, and the moves Byrne has made.

SUPERMAN

SUPERMAN

I worked on the story for "Superman IV" [released in 1987, on the heels of Byrne's Superman revamp for DC]. But by the time it came out, there was no trace of me anywhere in it. And that was "my Hollywood experience." They sat me in a corner and threw money at me–$20,000 for two days' work. I spent the first six months afterward going, "Am I going to get the screen credit?" And I spent the next six going, "Please [tell me] I'm not going to get the screen credit!"

GREEN LANTERN

At approximately the same time I was working on "Superman IV," one of the highly placed people at DC asked me if I would like to do a treatment for Green Lantern–as a vehicle for Eddie Murphy. And I said, "Uh, thanks, no." It was like, "Whoa, we're not even out of the gate and we're stumbling."

GREEN LANTERN

NEXT MEN

I've got what I call my Hollywood lawyer out there, who keeps throwing my stuff around. He was pushing *Next Men* at DreamWorks a while ago. I guess the reaction was, "Well, this is really great, but everybody's doing superhero groups–we want Silver Surfer." Okay, fine. But I've also started a screenplay of *Grunt* [an unfinished novel Byrne used to lay some of the groundwork for *Next Men*]. We'll see.

THE CREW OF THE U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

I was digging around in some stuff upstairs a while back and found this [unsold] "Star Trek" screenplay that I wrote when I was 18. I sent it to DC and said, "Hey, do you want to do this as a comic?" And the Star Trek editor, being brilliant, said, "Oh, it's not quite what we're looking for." This is your chance to terminally embarrass me in front of everybody by doing a comic based on a screenplay written when I was 18–and you're going to *pass* on it? ■ TR

NEXT MEN

is, and I know if ever I do *Next Men* again, I'm not going to use it. So—pffft. The single greatest blow to Legend, I think, was when I stopped producing my stuff on a monthly basis. Suddenly you had *Sin City* and *Hellboy* coming out every once in a while—and nothing else. *C'est la vie.*

And what about your once and future employer? How's this latest "return to Marvel" been compared to others you've made?

Pretty smooth so far. It's hard to tell what state Marvel is in from minute to minute, but there seems to be enthusiasm, if nothing else. There's a country-and-western song I heard that had a verse in it that said, "When you hit rock bottom you're on solid ground." I think of that when I think of Marvel. But they're working on it right now, and I'm helping them to some extent. Fortunately, they're letting me work on a lot of stuff that's taking place in the Marvel Universe that I *knew*. Somebody online the other day said, "It would be great if we could do a whole bunch of books like *Twice Told Tales* and *Hidden Years*, and basically just cancel the present-day stuff and continue with Marvel as it was." [*Laughs*] It would be worth a try, I suppose.

Although that's the kind of suggestion that makes us ask: Do you think you're difficult to work with?

No, I don't think I'm difficult to work with. It's simple: Just be straight with me, and I'll be straight with whoever I'm working with. It's not much to ask—and yet it's *so* much to ask. [*Laughs*] Sometimes I give the editors that I don't have trouble with a hard time, because they like to pretend they have trouble with me so they can be heroes. You know, like Kupperberg will groan, "Aw, God! Byrne—aw, jeez!" Uh, you're not *helping* me here! [*Laughs*]

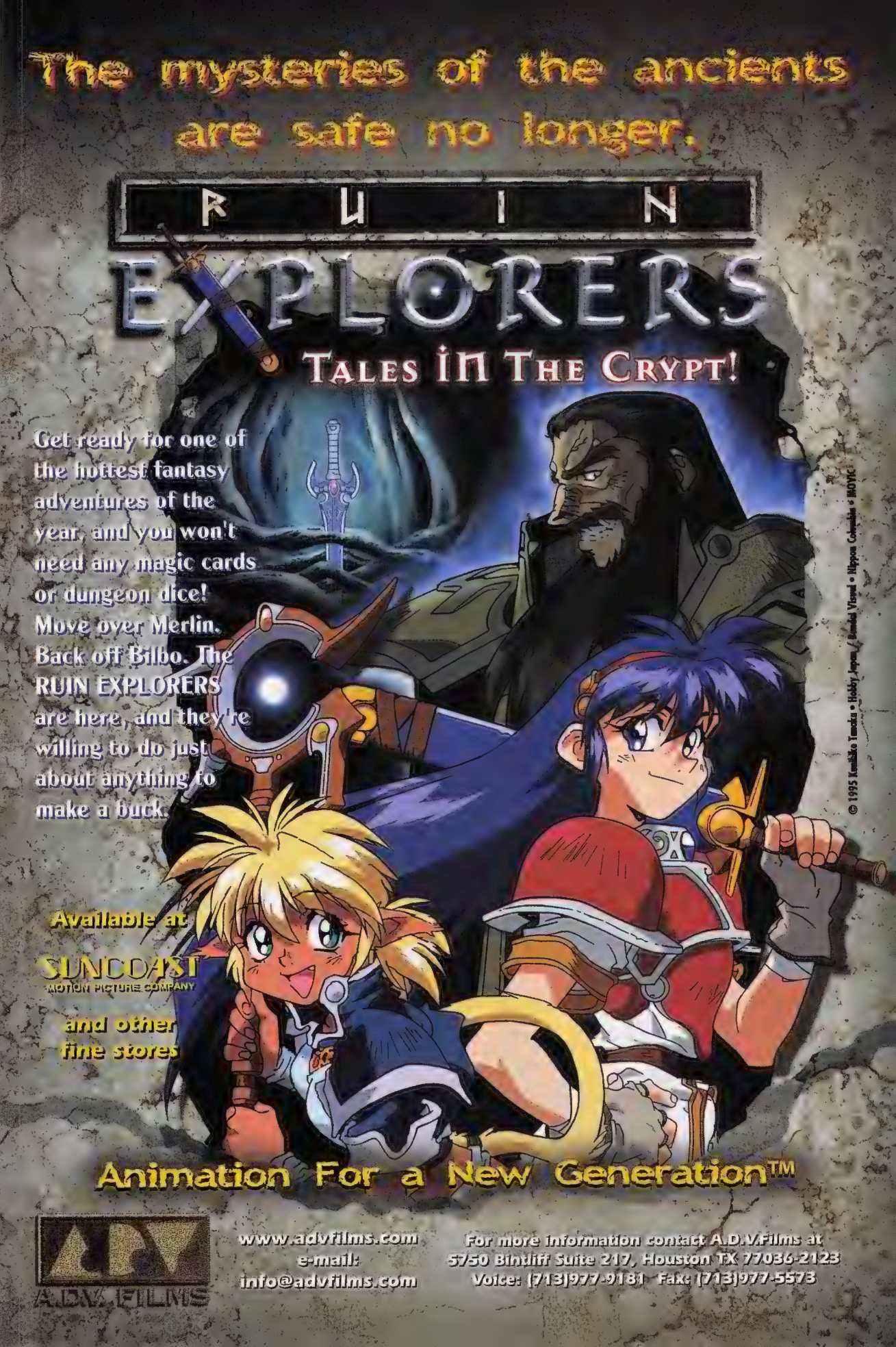
So what's the bottom-line secret to revitalizing characters like Spider-Man or Superman?

I've said many times that if you're going to write comics—especially American superhero comics—check your agenda at the door. Because you're there to serve the character. If you're handed FoneBoneMan, then you say, "Okay, what kind of FoneBoneMan stories can I do?" Not, "How can I tell *my* kinds of stories using FoneBoneMan?" Sometimes it means peeling away a lot of layers that others have stuck on, which can be very startling to fans. But I always look for the core of the character.

Where do you see all these new projects taking you?

After I did Superman, I very specifically said, "Okay, I'm going to go be obscure for a while," in the sense of not being famous for a while. And I think I was a little too successful. It was during the peak of my obscurity that I launched *Next Men*. Oops—perfect timing! So now, some part of me deep in the back of my brain is thinking, "Go do this Spider-Man book. Go do this X-Men book. Go be 'that new guy, John Byrne.'" You know? "And go get famous again." (W)

Los Angeles-based writer Tom Russo wants to be revamped—mostly so all those pesky parking tickets can be Man of Steel*-ed right outta there.*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1998 SUMMER PREVIEW

By Matthew Brady

A SNEAK PEEK AT THE STORYLINES OF THIS SUMMER'S HOTTEST BOOKS

AH, THE SUMMER.

Warm weather. Clear skies. Fun in the sun. Yeah, right! Summertime means one thing: comics! And lots of 'em. But with a long summer ahead, and more comics out there than you can count (even with your shoes off), where's a fanboy to start? Worry not, 'cause *Wizard*'s already done the hard part for you. We've dug up all the secret info on what's coming up in your favorite books.

We've got all the secrets, twists and teases you can handle crammed into one mammoth feature. Who lives? Who dies? Who comes to life? Who makes a surprise return? And who loses an eye? Now stop wondering and start readin'!

ASTRO CITY

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The superhero Jack-in-the-Box confronted his "sons" from a potential future in which he had died. Feeling abandoned, these sons traveled back in time to kill their father, but only met defeat. Seeing the danger inherent in being a father *and* a superhero, Jack found someone else to wear his costume, while he mentors from behind the scenes. Also, we've caught up with the animated Leo the Lion, as well as Steeljack, a full-metal ex-supervillain trying to go straight.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Steeljack's story continues through issue #19, and wraps up his investigation into the mystery of who's been killing small-time villains. Even though he's breaking parole to do it, Steeljack feels obligated to the family members of hardened criminals, who've asked him to help out.

DOWN THE ROAD: Writer Kurt Busiek's still unsure of what stories will follow Steeljack's adventure, but some possibilities include a story explaining what happened to Silver Agent in the '70s (a story he originally planned for *Marvels II*), and one- or two-part stories featuring the Astronaut, Air Ace, the Honor Guard, Beauty or the Enforcer.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Toys! Newcomer toy company Toy Vault will be producing Astro City toys to hit shelves in late '98. Included in the first assortment are Samaritan, Junkman, Winged Victory and the Silver Agent. Also, a Samaritan statue sculpted by Randy Bowen is on its way as well, so keep those Astro-eyes peeled!

THE AVENGERS

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Having defeated Morgan Le Fay with help from the ghost of Wonder Man, the Avengers settled on a regular roster consisting of Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch, Vision and Warbird (formerly Ms. Marvel), with Justice and Firestar as reserve members. Once the team lineup was finalized, Earth's Mightiest Heroes quickly found themselves in serious conflict with the Squadron Supreme, whose members accused the Avengers of being impostors.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: *Avengers* #8–#9 pits the team against a group of terrorists led by Moses Magnum, as well as introducing a couple of new characters (one in particular, Triathlon, may become an Avenger). Issue #10 showcases the 35th anniversary of the team with Avengers' Day in New York City, while the Scarlet Witch heads off to work with Agatha Harkness in #11 to investigate the Wonder Man mystery. Also, by summer's end, Firestar and Justice will be on active duty, while two members will have left, one against his (or her) will.

DOWN THE ROAD: The Avengers go up against the Thunderbolts in #12, a double-sized issue full of old grudges and new understandings. Also, how can you have the Avengers without Ultron? Well, you can't. . . so look for the megalomaniacal robot to show up soon, once again bent on world conquest and the destruction of the Avengers.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Besides a 12-issue *Avengers: World in Chains* mini-series by Kurt Busiek and Carlos Pacheco starting this fall, keep on the lookout for an Avengers/Thunderbolts novel by Pierce Askergren coming early next year from Byron Preiss.

BATMAN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAMS: Doug Moench and various artists (*Batman*); Chuck Dixon and various artists (*Detective Comics*); Alan Grant, Mark Buckingham and Wayne Faucher (*Batman: Shadow of the Bat*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Gotham's in ruins. Nailed by a 7.6 earthquake that nearly leveled the city, the home turf of Batman, Robin, Catwoman and Huntress is a hell-hole, choked by rubble and overrun by crime. Batman's suffered a personal loss with Wayne Manor's destruction, and his need to stop crime has reached all-new levels of obsession.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: The aftershocks continue through the Bat-books! *Detective*, #725 features Nightwing and Batman mopping up Gotham's ruins, the Joker (securely locked in his cell but causing trouble anyway) kicks up a ruckus in #726, and we get a chance to see Batman's future with *Detective* #1,000,000. Meanwhile in *Batman* and *Shadow*, look for a flashback of sorts as we learn where Bruce Wayne went and what he learned during the "Prodigal" storyline a few years back.

DOWN THE ROAD: In *Detective*, look for a two-part Man-Bat story in #727–#728, and Mr. Freeze makes trouble with that pesky Contagion virus in #729–#730, prompting Azrael to pop in and help out. Watch for things to start building towards this fall's "No Man's Land," a mega-storyline featuring heroes and villains alike trying to get the heck outta Gotham.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: The inside buzz on the Bat-books is that a major, *major* shakeup is coming soon, something that'll make "Cataclysm" pale in comparison. Word has it there are also some serious creator and title changes in store for the Bat-books.

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAMS: Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang (*Captain America*); Mark Waid, Ron Garney and Bob Wiacek (*Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Having returned to a world that views him as the greatest living hero, Captain America's had to rethink his image, a move which forced Cap to take a more proactive role in his fight for justice. Things came to a screeching halt when he was kidnapped and impersonated by a Skrull, leading to open hostilities between the Skrulls and Earth, teaming the escaped Cap with the Avengers in an all-out battle.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: *Cap* #9 kicks off the three-part "American Nightmare" storyline, sending Cap across the country as people who've achieved the "American Dream" start going nuts, and Cap has to fight going mad himself. In *Sentinel* #1, look for a story set in 2000 as Cap and Sharon Carter prevent the Red Skull from destroying the country, and reveal stuff about what's happened in *their* past, but our future.

DOWN THE ROAD: More Cap/Sharon interactions are on the way in *Cap* as the two try to rekindle their old feelings, while Cap tries to re-establish a private life as Steve Rogers. In *Sentinel*, watch for upcoming storylines to reflect on the first Cap/Bucky team-up, along with plenty of W.W.II action and other periods in Cap's past.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Keep your eyes peeled for a Randy Bowen-sculpted Cap mini-bust based on Adam Kubert sketches coming soon. Also, prepare for a late '98 Red Skull bookshelf one-shot. It'll definitively update the pesky villain for the times, while dealing with his motivations and greatest mental block, which, surprisingly, ain't Cap.

THE DARKNESS

CREATIVE TEAM: Malachy Coney, Joe Benitez and Joe Weems

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Jackie Estacado (wielder of the Darkness) recently dealt with Mafia princess Appolonia Franchetti, who wanted to take her pop's place as ruler of the family. But poppa told her no way, José, so Appolonia sought to become the new Angelus in order to kill Jackie, her dad's longtime buddy. But wouldn't ya know it, at the last moment of the ceremony the Angelus energy entered and revived Appolonia's vegetative mother instead. Barely surviving *that* battle, Jackie found himself the target of Magdelena, a one-woman army who's vowed to annihilate him.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Thanks to Magdelena, Jackie's afforded a stunning moment of clarity, allowing him to see his potential with the Darkness. So he'll cut ties with most of the Mafia, opting to investigate more of the history and potential of the Darkness.

DOWN THE ROAD: Jackie's quest for understanding will lead him to discovering who sent the Magdelena his way–a most pious guy named Cardinal Innocent, a small player of a mysterious group which has dealt with the Darkness and the Angelus for over 2,000 years. The mysterious group thinks Jackie's got the potential to be the greatest Darkness ever, and these guys are willing to go to any means to control him.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Besides some kickin' Darkness figures by Moore Action Collectibles heading your way in late '98/early '99, keep your eyes peeled for a Moore Creations Darkness statue. Also, word on the street is that a Batman/Darkness crossover may be in the works.

MARVEL COMICS
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DEADPOOL

CREATIVE TEAM: Joe Kelly, Walter McDaniel and Anibal Rodriguez
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Wade Wilson (a.k.a. Deadpool) accepted Landau, Luckman, and Lake's offer to join the extra-dimensional firm which specializes in reality adjustments and destiny realignments. While he'd like to be more heroic, 'Pool has been on a personal mission to stop the mysterious Ajax, who's been whacking old Weapon X survivors–Wade included. Yeah, he died...but don't worry. Wade got better.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: After taking care of Ajax, LL&L grooms Deadpool for participation in the Mithras Directive, a mysterious plot that even LL&L doesn't know the full scope of. We'll also get a look into Deadpool's past and learn the mystery behind Blind Al, and why after all these years, she's still Deadpool's hostage.
DOWN THE ROAD: A few familiar faces from Deadpool's past will be showing up this fall, including guests at October's Deadpool month, which sees a few special projects like the *Deadpool Sourcebook*–which'll lay out the entire Deadpool story, pointing out subplots and things you might've missed the first time around; *Baby's First Deadpool Book* with activities and games in a twisted Deadpool style; a *Widdle Wade One-Shot*, written by James Felder, bringing the baby 'Pool into the Marvel Universe and a trade paperback collecting some early issues.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: Joe Kelly fans rejoice! The four-issue *Lightningrods* mini-series by Kelly starts up this winter, following the misadventures of the heroes formerly known as the Great Lakes Avengers.

DIVINE RIGHT: THE ADVENTURES OF MAX FARADAY

CREATIVE TEAM: Jim Lee and Scott Williams
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Max Faraday was your average 20-year-old...until he read the Creation Equation, that is. Now, he's powered by the Allpower and has Rath, Bloodhounds and the warriors of the Fallen on his tail, some trying to kill him, others wanting to help. Toss in the ever-interfering organization International Operations (I/O), John Lynch and Coda assassins, and Faraday's life will never be the same again.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Still unsure of his power and destiny as the Chosen One, Max is even more surprised when he finds himself transported to another dimension, one that strangely resembles every sword-and-sorcery fantasy he's ever had, and quickly finds himself in danger. The mystery of the otherworld deepens as Max realizes the dimension is filled with familiar objects. As the danger increases, Max's gotta figure out if he's on a future Earth, a different Earth–or just having really bad gas.
DOWN THE ROAD: Look for Max to stay in the other-Earth for a few issues as he faces challenges and grows, both physically and character-wise. His trip will eventually lead him to the "Yoda" of the dimension, a little guy with all the answers.
THE INSIDE SCOOP: According to the book's creator Jim Lee, *Divine Right* has always been a story with a beginning, middle and end. Look for the series to wrap up somewhere around issues #15–#20.

AVENGERS #7
"Live Kree Or Die" The Conclusion!
KURT BUSIEK
GEORGE PÉREZ
AL VEY
MARVEL HEROES
IN JUNE
FANTASTIC FOUR #8
FEATURING THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS.!
IRON MAN #7
"LIVE KREE OR DIE"
PART 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA #8
"LIVE KREE OR DIE"
PART 2
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FANTASTIC FOUR

CREATIVE TEAM: Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: With Four Freedoms Plaza destroyed by the Thunderbolts, the Fantastic Four have relocated to a warehouse on the Hudson River. Adjusting to the new status quo, the Four have found themselves in battle with Crucible, who somehow tampered with Mr. Fantastic's vast intellect. The team's also dealt with the tragedy of Franklin Richards being kidnapped by the Technet, which views him as the galaxy's most dangerous being.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Human Torch Johnny Storm brings a souvenir back to Earth with him after the Technet battle. In writer Chris Claremeont's words, "She's 6-feet-tall, really cute, speaks no English and is absolute hell on wheels." And Franklin gets a puppy! Only problem? The puppy's father is Lockjaw, the giant Inhuman dog. Paper training's gonna be tough.

DOWN THE ROAD: As we look toward the year 2000, we'll see a lot of old FF staples return. Some will be silly–like Tomazooma, The Living Totem–and some will be *deadly* serious–like Dr. Doom!

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Rumor has it that a Fantastic Four/Gen13 one-shot by Kevin Maguire is in the works, but still pending approval. And Franklin's dog? Word is Marvel's going to let a lucky fan give him a name through a contest at this year's San Diego Comic Convention.

THE FLASH

CREATIVE TEAM: Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Pop Mhan and Chris Ivy

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: After being handed twin broken legs, Wally West (a.k.a. Flash) has recovered nicely, and fashioned himself a new suit made from solidified Speed Force. He even took a vacation with Green Lantern and Green Arrow, only to be interrupted by Sonar, Hatchet, Heat Wave and Dr. Polaris. Following that, Wally found himself in a cosmic race with Earth's existence at stake, and then up against the Speed Force itself as he discovered the Force was corrupted when Savatar joined with it back in #100.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Mark Millar and Grant Morrison's year-long run wraps up with #141's conclusion to the "Black Flash" storyline, paving the way for the return of creators Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn. Ish #142 starts with a bang–the wedding of Wally and Linda Park, with nearly a jillion guest stars. *Flash* #1,000,000 sends the Scarlet Speedster to the future, where a Flash supporting character plays a pivotal role. And Wally battles a couple of familiar nasties in #143-#144 before kicking off the mega "Chain Lightning" arc in #145-#150. Which brings us to...

DOWN THE ROAD: "Chain Lightning" will chronicle the legacy of the Flash for the next 1,000 years, with #150 scheduled as a double-sized whammy conclusion that, according to insiders, has jaws dropping around the DC offices.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Okay DC fans, with the success of the Legion flight rings and the Green Lantern rings, you can bet DC's hard at work on a Flash ring *á la* Barry Allen. Expect it around year's end.

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #30

•

TRAPPED IN MURDERWORLD WITH THE BLACK CAT!

SPIDER-MAN

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #260
HOBGOBLIN
VS.
GREEN GOBLIN

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #94
"WHO WAS JOEY Z?"

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #437
HE'S A SPIDER, MAN!

MARVEL COMICS
BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

IN JUNE

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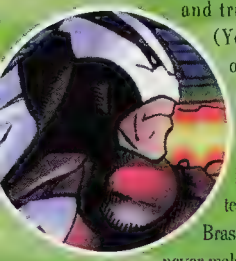
MORE SUMMER LOVIN'

AKIKO

The gang goes in search of a medicine that can save Mr. Beeba's mentor, only to find it jealously guarded by a giant with an unpleasant personality. For the first time, the group may have to split into two to get the elixir, allowing a couple of new themes, such as a possible romance for Akiko.

ALPHA FLIGHT

Issue #14's the big funeral issue, which sets up the new status quo for Department H, and may just allow the team to fully come together and trust one another. (Yeah, right!) Some original Alphans show up in #15-#16, and a couple wanna join up. Problem is, the team's off fighting the Brass Bishop and may never make it home again.



AQUAMAN

The big fish guy's 50th issue kicks off with Aquaman's birthday party, something so loud it wakes up the neighbors. Yep, seems there's a whole new culture that's lived in the ocean longer than the Atlanteans, led by a guy named Noble who just might give Aquaman a run for his money. Oh yeah, look for Mera's return as well.

ASCENSION

Petra takes charge in the Minean camp, and Harris Green finds out the folks he thought he was working for really ain't the CIA after all, and Lucien has to break him outta the lockup. Look for big changes as the Mineans and Dayaks adjust to a new reality, one in which they realize their "war" was created by evil individuals for their own purposes.

BATTLE CHASERS

Things heat up as the most respected leaders in the land start dropping like flies. Knolan seems to know what's going on, but he's not sharing it with the group. We begin to learn

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66

GEN13

CREATIVE TEAM: John Arcudi, Gary Frank and Cam Smith

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The kids traded their sunny West Coast headquarters for New York digs, allowing Burnout and Grunge to try the nightlife (and get arrested), as well as running into Tindalos, a Gen-active bad guy with bizarre ties to Grunge.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Look for Alex Fairchild to re-enter the team's life as the gang moves to the Florida Keys for a while. Starting with #31, the team will run into some pretty weird stuff, like lizard races, voodoo and old hippies. And, of course, since we're talking Florida, look for a hurricane to hit hard, causing a couple of team members to go missing and presumed dead.

DOWN THE ROAD: Tension between Caitlin Fairchild and team mentor John Lynch comes to a head, forcing a confrontation between Alex and Lynch over the team's future. And that means a change in leadership. Unfortunately, don't look for a happy ending, seeing as how Lynch is becoming just a bit unglued.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: The Gen13 animated movie is done and just waiting to be put on a distribution schedule, which should be roughly around Christmas time. Also, keep on the lookout for *Gen13: Netherwar*, a novel by Christopher Golden and Jeff Mariotte hitting bookstores in late '98 or early '99.

GREEN LANTERN

CREATIVE TEAM: Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, Paul Pelletier and Terry Austin

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Catapulted to the future, Green Lantern Kyle Rayner found himself in the age of the Legion of Super-Heroes. After defeating a rogue GL Corps, the Legion overshot Kyle's trip home, sending him into the past, where he encountered a young GL Hal Jordan. Wanting a souvenir, Kyle accidentally brought Hal to the present.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Hal meets the current JLA in #103. Knowing the mad villain he'll one day become (Parallax), the heroes cast a wary eye his way, something that makes Kyle feel unwelcome. After all, he's responsible for bringing this soon-to-be mass murderer back. . . er, forward in time. Hal, Kyle and Connor Hawke (Green Arrow) team up in #104, and by #105-#106, Hal's presence in the present has brought unwelcome attention from someone who wants him back in his correct time, someone who's already tried to set the timeline straight before....

DOWN THE ROAD: *GL* #1,000,000 catches up with Rayner in the future, hanging out on Starman's space station. Following that, look for someone else to wear the ring in issues #107-#109, but will this be in addition to Kyle, or *instead* of him?

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Check out a Green Lantern 3-D special later in the year, as well as a painted GL hardcover by Marz and Brad Parker in early '99. And complete your GL statue collection with next year's Alan Scott piece, based on a design by Steve Rude.

X-MEN #78

•

Beware the Shadow King!

•

FEATURING
STORM AND PSYLOCKE

X-MEN

UNCANNY X-MEN #358

CABLE #57

WOLVERINE #127

MARVEL COMICS

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

IN JUNE

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about Garrison's past, including a previous relationship with Red Monika. Gully struggles to learn more about her powers, as they seem to be getting out of control. And, of course, we learn some disturbing things about Gaia.

BONE

Following the group's return from the mountains, a new story arc kicks off with #33, where we'll find out just what's up with Phoney Bone, and how the villagers react to the fact that he's really *not* the dragon-slayer he claims. We'll also catch up with Thorn and find out what the love of Fone's life has been up to since we saw her last.

CABLE

After pussyfooting around with him for years, S.H.I.E.L.D. decides to take Cable down, dead or alive. And this ain't Nick Fury's S.H.I.E.L.D., it's a darker branch of S.H.I.E.L.D. that would give Fury's nightmares nightmares. Also, look for the Hulk villain Zzzax to make an appearance.

CATWOMAN

Catwoman goes up against a thief-proof bank in #61, only to be beat out by a gang of armed thieves, while Nemesis drops by in #62, asking her to train him as a cat burglar. Then, the three-part "Hints and Allegations" sees the Joker go after Batman's girlfriend--someone he thinks is Catwoman.

CRIMSON

Alex battles the Jelly Bats leader, Rose, in #3, realizing that to survive the battle, he may have to embrace the darkness inside himself! And that ain't too appealing, since there may be no coming back once he does. A new storyline kicks off in #4, featuring the Judas Children and the mysterious Lady in Red from #1.

DANGER GIRL

Danger Girl #3 features Abbey Chase, Johnny Barracuda and the Danger Girls going off to Switzerland for an all-out attack on the mysterious bad guy bent on world domination. Major Maxim makes his debut in #4, nearly killing the girls in the process. Chase officially decides whether or not to join

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

INCREDIBLE HULK

CREATIVE TEAM: Joe Casey, Javier Pulido and Larry Mahlstedt

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: United with his Bruce Banner persona, the Hulk found himself switching between Bruce and Hulk when angered. Recently, the Hulk was handed his greatest loss ever when his wife Betty was killed. The trauma led to a mental breakdown for the big guy, submerging his "'smart Hulk" persona, and allowing the savage Hulk to resurface.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Issue #468 pits the Hulk against the army, which is aiming to take the Jade Giant down for good. The Super-Adaptoid shows up in #469, and the Circus of Crime pops in for a two issues in #470-#471. Also, look for Thunderbolt Ross to take a more proactive role in the book, as well as changes with Bruce, as he seeks to deal with his new transformations.

DOWN THE ROAD: The bestial Hulk is set to continue for the near future. Also, look for the restrained, civilized Banner to return to the disciplined world of science, where he'll quickly reestablish himself as one of Marvel's biggest brains around.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: While he recently left the book for other pastures, writer Peter David ain't finished with the Hulk just yet. A two-issue prestige format sequel of sorts to the classic *Future Imperfect* mini-series (titled *Past Imperfect*) is scheduled to start in late '98 or early '99, which will bring the Maestro's story to a close...for now.

IRON MAN

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen and Eric J. Cannon

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Refocused and redefined, Tony Stark opened Stark Solutions, an international problem-solving firm. He's also run into more than his share of problems, including Dreadnoughts and a new deadly Firebrand. Romance has also re-entered Tony's life, a fact driven home by a team-up with the Black Widow in Australia. Over time, however, Tony slowly realized that someone's pulling the strings behind the scenes--someone he's fought many times before.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Issues #8 and #9 feature the big knock-down fight with the Mandar...er, mystery villain who's been bugging Tony since his return. Besides wrapping up the storyline, the battle will have some serious implications for Tony. So serious, in fact, he's gotta take all of issue #10 to recover. Then be on the lookout for the Controller to rear his ugly mug as he tries to...well, control things.

DOWN THE ROAD: Tony's issues with his friend Jim Rhodes will be resolved in #12, and we'll learn more about why Sunset Bain keeps bugging Stark to help her. And keep yer eyes peeled for the return of Madame Masque down the road.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: October's *Captain America/Iron Man '98*, co-plotted by Kurt Busiek and Mark Waid, shows what happens when differing philosophies lead to a conflict between the two heroes. Also be on the lookout for an Iron Man mini-bust from Randy Bowen.

SPIDER-MAN: MADE MEN
A ONE-SHOT WITH A WHOLE LOT OF BULLETS!
GUEST-STARRING DAREDEVIL!
HOWARD MACKIE
NORMAN FELCHE
IRON MAN: The Iron Age #1 of 2
48 PAGES SET IN THE SILVER AGE OF MARVELS
KURT BUSIEK
PATRICK ZIRCHER
BOB MCLEOD
MARVEL
HOT PICKS
X-BABIES
CAUGHT BETWEEN A MOJO AND AN ARCADE!
48 PAGES
RUBEN DIAZ
J.J. KIRBY
IN JUNE
THE RAMPAGING HULK #1
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GREEN PEACE!
48 PAGES
GLENN GREENBERG
RICK LEONARDI
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the Danger Girls in #5, while a quest for secret objects heats up, sending the team all over the Earth.

GENERATION X

Issue #42 starts the storyline that'll reorganize of the school, its classes and maybe even Generation X itself. Since the Education Department is investigating the Xavier Institute's official status, it goes without saying that the Massachusetts Academy is getting a close look as well. Look for the school's transition to shake things up for the rest of the summer.

HEROES FOR HIRE

The Black Knight gets the spotlight in #14, while #15-#16 ties into *Quicksilver* #11-#12 and the *Heroes For Hire/Quicksilver Annual* for "The Siege of Wundagore." Seems everyone wants the High Evolutionary's secrets, and the Heroes have to protect him. Later on, look for the specifics of Danny Rand's deal with the Dragon Kings of K'un L'un to come to light.

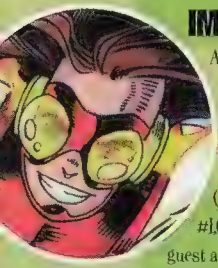
HITMAN

Get ready for a look into Tommy Monaghan's past where we'll learn of his teenage years and see what made him the man he is today. Also, look for a guest appearance by Superman, as well as a trip to the future with *Hitman* #1,000,000. When we return to the present, expect some wild times with the JLA and dinosaurs.

HOUSE OF SECRETS

"Basement" wraps with #23 as Rain Harper and her friends are cast into Hell on Earth and Hell under the house. Next up, Peter Snejberg gets a chance to show off his cartooning skills with #24, and #25 kicks features another "Blueprint" story called "Elevation B," exploring the construction of the supernatural Seattle mansion that houses the otherworldly Jurts.

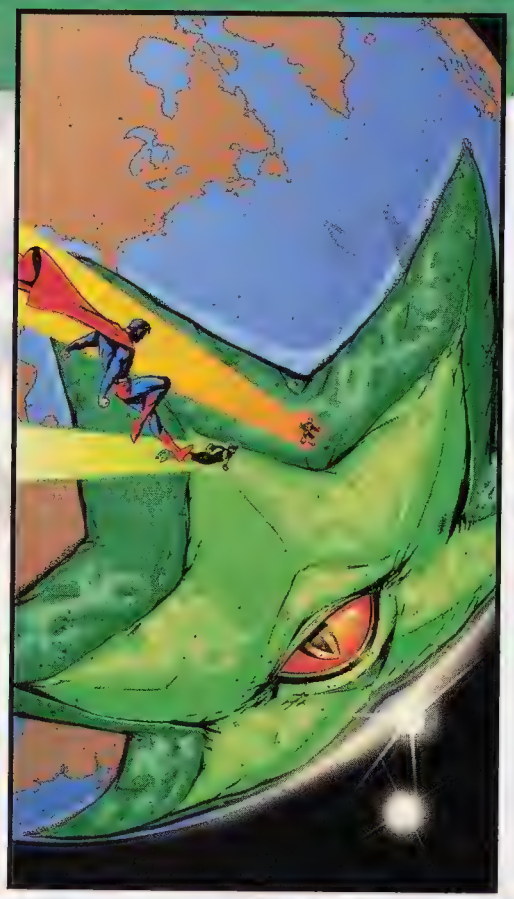
IMPULSE



Arrowette returns to torment Bart in #41 with art by guest penciler Ethan Van Sciver (*Cyberfrog*). *Impulse* #1,000,000 features a guest appearance by John Fox, the Flash of the future, and following that, Max Mercury's history will go under the microscope, as more of the old guy's secrets are revealed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 70

JLA



CREATIVE TEAM: Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: With its membership rounded out at 14 heroes, the team's recently gone up against Dr. September's Engine of Chance, and been enslaved by the mind-controlled Adam Strange who made the JLAers rebuild Rann in preparation of his wife's return–except...uh...well, his wife's been dead for years.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: *JLA* #22-#23 pits the team against the Star Conquerors, who were last seen in *JLA Secret Files* #1. Next, most of the JLA heads to the future for the #1,000,000 issue, unfortunately leaving the Watchtower open to attack from other future-folk. After that, the Ultra-Marines (American soldiers acting under government sanction in the case of a meta-human uprising) debut in a three-parter that sends them to the JLA Trophy Room to prove their mettle by stealing the inert body of the Shaggy Man. The Atom guest stars in the story, making his move from the Titans to the JLA.

DOWN THE ROAD: Issues #27-#29 feature a JLA/JSA team-up that introduces a new Johnny Thunder and Thunderbolt, and lays the groundwork for an upcoming war in the 5th-dimension story with Mr. Mxyzptlk. Also, the Shaggy Man's role in the JLA's future will become clear later this year.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Besides a three-issue mini-series crossing the JLA over with the new Titans in late '98, look for a 96-page JLA hardcover by Grant Morrison and Frank Quietly pitting the team against the newly formed Crime Syndicate in early '99.

PREACHER

CREATIVE TEAM: Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Jesse Custer, Tulip O'Hare and Cassidy traveled to Monument Valley where, unbeknownst to them, Starr was waiting with a military force large enough to jump-start W.W.III. The Saint of Killers showed up as well, and Starr nuked the entire valley in order to get rid of him–a plan that didn't work and nearly killed Jesse in the process. Cass and Tulip, thinking Jesse dead, have sought comfort with each other, while an injured Custer wandered in the desert.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Custer returns from the desert with one eye less than what he went in with, but with a new perspective and direction. Meanwhile, Tulip makes some really bad choices regarding Cass' romantic advances.

DOWN THE ROAD: Jesse picks up a canine sidekick, and meets up with Tulip's friend Amy, a move that confuses Jesse's feelings toward Tulip even more. Also, the entire tone of the series changes as Cass becomes a bigger bastard, and continues taking advantage of Tulip's grieving condition. Look for major fireworks when the three eventually reunite.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Besides another one-shot by Garth Ennis and Kieron Dwyer–possibly on Tulip–Ennis fans will want to check out *Hellblazer* #129-#133. Ennis' "Son of Man" storyline looks at what happens when John Constantine reanimates the dead.

MARVEL

June Highlights from the House of Ideas!

On sale June 3

- ☐ **Cable #57**
  Hit by the EMP wave and changed forever!
- ☐ **Daredevil #378**
  "Flying Blind" part 3!
- ☐ **Essential Spider-Man Vol. 3**
  Amazing Spider-Man #44-69 and Annual #4 by Stan Lee & John Romita Sr.!
- ☐ **Fantastic Four #8**
  The FF vs. The Captain Britain Corps!
- ☐ **Ka-Zar #16**
  Guest-starring the Punisher!
- ☐ **Maverick #12**
  The double-sized last issue!
- ☐ **Rampaging Hulk #1**
  There's no such thing as green peace! 48 pages by Glenn Greenberg and Rick Leonardi!

Art from RAMPAGING HULK #1

- ☐ **Sensational Spider-Man #30**
  Trapped in Murderworld with the Black Cat!
- ☐ **Thor #2**
  Thor makes a deal with Hela!
- ☐ **Uncanny X-Men #358**
  Fall of the Phoenix!
- ☐ **X-Men: The Manga #10**
  40-page finale to the Morlock saga!

On sale June 10

- ☐ **Alpha Flight #13**
  Who lives on the 13th floor of Department H?
- ☐ **The Amazing Spider-Man #437**
  Featuring... the Amazing Spider?!
- ☐ **Doctor Who #266**
  The official, full-color photo magazine of the renegade Time Lord!
- ☐ **Generation X #41**
  You like horror movies, don't you, Jubilee?
- ☐ **The Hulk & Sub-Mariner '98**
  The classic "Tales To Astonish" team-up together again for the first time in 30 years!
- ☐ **Iron Man #7**
  "Live Kree Or Die" Part 1!
- ☐ **Marvel Adventures #17**
  Featuring Spider-Man! Guest-starring Iron Man!
- ☐ **Marvel Universe #3**
  The Invaders vs. Hydra!
- ☐ **Pint-Sized X-Babies: Murderama**
  48 pages of Mojo mayhem!
- ☐ **Spider-Man: The Manga #16**
  The most controversial Japanese Spider-Man saga of them all begins here!
- ☐ **X-Factor #148**
  Spotlight on Bishop's sister, Shard!

On sale June 17

- ☐ **Captain America #8**
  "Live Kree Or Die" Part 2!
- ☐ **Excalibur #123**
  The team vs. Mimic, the mutant with the powers of the original X-Men!
- ☐ **Heroes For Hire #14**
  Spotlight on the Black Knight!
- ☐ **Incredible Hulk # 467**
  The last Peter David issue!
- ☐ **Incredible Hulk: Beauty & The Beast TPB**
  A collection spotlighting the Hulk's relationship with Betty Ross!
- ☐ **Peter Parker, Spider-Man #94**
  "Who was Joey Z?" The search for the answer begins!
- ☐ **Seeker 3000 #3 (of 4)**
  War aboard the Seeker!
- ☐ **Silver Surfer & Thor '98**
  Milennius is coming!
- ☐ **Spider-Man: Made Men**
  It's a Spider-Man 48-page one-shot with a whole lot of bullets!
- ☐ **Thunderbolts #17**
  Things aren't looking up as Graviton is back!
- ☐ **What If? #111**
  What if... Wolverine became a Horseman of Apocalypse?
- ☐ **X-Man #41**
  The return of Roger Cruz!
- ☐ **X-Men #78**
  The Return of Professor X!
- ☐ **X-Men: The Manga #11**
  Wolverine vs. Sabretooth in the Arctic Wastelands!

On sale June 24

- ☐ **Avengers #7**
  "Live Kree or Die" Part 4!
- ☐ **Conan: River of Blood #3 (of 3)**
  Who is The Lord of the Crocodiles?
- ☐ **Deadpool #19**
  Deadpool's the herald to cosmic peace?!
- ☐ **Iron Fist #2 (of 3)**
  The Living Weapon vs. S.H.I.E.L.D.!
- ☐ **Iron Man: The Iron Age #1 (of 2)**
  Who really killed Tony Stark's parents?
- ☐ **Marvel #3**
  The 48-page scoop on everything coming from Marvel in September... including Joe Quesada's and Jimmy Palmiotti's new take on Daredevil!
- ☐ **Quicksilver #10**
  "Live Kree Or Die" Part 3!
- ☐ **Silver Surfer #142**
  Art by Jon J Muth!
- ☐ **The Spectacular Spider-Man #260**
  The Original Hobgoblin vs. The Original Green Goblin!
- ☐ **Spider-Man: The Manga #17**
  Spotlighting Spider-Man's civilian identity!
- ☐ **Spider-Man Unlimited #21**
  Frankenstein's Monster lives again!
- ☐ **Wolverine #127**
  Think of this as Sabretooth #1!
- ☐ **X-Force #80**
  X-Force vs. Reignfire! The final battle!
- ☐ **X-Man & The Hulk '98**
  Nate's power is destroying him! Bruce's power is destroying everything else!

Cover to AVENGERS #7

MARVEL COMICS

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KA-ZAR

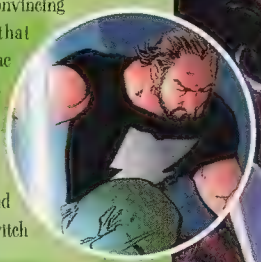
Wanted for a murder he didn't commit, a somewhat blind and deaf Ka-Zar is hunted by Marvel's finest. Meanwhile, the Savage Land natives turn against Shanna the She-Devil, who's forced to flee for her life, and must make a deal with the devil to guarantee her safety.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

The Dark Circle storyline continues as the Affiliated Planets, made up of planets that've defected from the United Planets, continue to stir up trouble. The Dark Circle's leader will be revealed as the story reaches its climax, a revelation that'll have grave implications for at least one member.

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED

More and more heroes continue to gather in the northern lands, convincing Kevin Matchstick that something major on the supernatural scale is coming—and that it's coming for him. Before he can worry, Matchstick is enchanted and falls in love with the witch Magda, sister of Isis.



MAJOR BUMMER

Issues #14 and #15 will wrap up one of comics' most convoluted, insane (And hilarious!) time-travel stories ever as Lou Martin finds more and more versions of himself through time. Things reach a head in issue #15, when the assembled guys form the JLA—Joint Lous of America—and discover who's been behind their time odyssey.

NIGHTWING

Nightwing helps a retired cop solve that one final case in #24, and Robin shows up in #25. John Law (a.k.a. the Golden Age Tarantula) takes center stage with #26, featuring a special framing sequence that's half pulp story/half modern comic. And after #1,000,000 offers a futuristic view of Nightwing, the Huntress shows up for a four-parter pitting the two against Blüdhaven's mob bosses.

POISON ELVES

Accused and hunted for a crime they weren't responsible for, Lusiphur and Jace try to escape from Mandratha, a task that's much, much easier said than done. Blocked at every turn, the two will be turning to some questionable

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

SPAWN

CREATIVE TEAM: Todd McFarlane, Brian Holguin, Greg Capullo and Chance Wolf

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Spending more time examining the grittier side of the alleys, Spawn took a nastier turn with a recent gruesome battle with the Freak and a run-in with a shambling monstrosity known as The Heap. At the same time, Spawn grew aware of a dark foreboding that something beyond Heaven and Hell was coming, and he's started wondering if he's even in control of his own life anymore.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Spawn's examination of the alleyways continues as the Heap and other former Eclipse characters make their debuts in Spawn's world. Then there's the dead zone in the alleys, a clear domain of Heaven in the city's worst pit of hell. What's it doing there, and how's it play into Spawn's life?

DOWN THE ROAD: Spawn's book will move toward more reality-based stories as the year goes on, dropping many of the supernatural elements and focusing more on Spawn himself, rather than his supporting cast. By year's end, the series will have a darker, grittier edge, more in line with Todd McFarlane's original intentions for his undead hero.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Look for all the media versions of Spawn to present a unified version of the character by the year 2000, as McFarlane streamlines all the forms into one consistent character. Also, if everything goes as planned, "Spawn II" should hit theaters in the summer of 2000.

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAMS: Tom DeFalco, Joe Bennett and Bud LaRosa (*Amazing Spider-Man*); Todd DeZago, Mike Wieringo and Richard Case (*Sensational Spider-Man*); Howard Mackie and Javier Saltares (*Peter Parker: Spider-Man*); Roger Stern, Glenn Greenberg, Luke Ross and Dan Green (*Spectacular Spider-Man*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Falsely accused of murder, Spidey went into hiding in plain view, adopting four new superhero identities: Ricochet, Dusk, Hornet and Prodigy. After being cleared of the accusations, Spidey gave up his other identities, but not his troubles. He's since taken on the Hobgoblin, Arcade and the Green Goblin. Sheesh! Can't this guy catch a break?

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: In *Sensational*, Black Cat stops by to help Spidey beat Arcade and the Rhino, while Web-head has his final battle with the Black Tarantula in *Amazing* and Ghost Rider shows up in *Peter Parker*. Over in *Spectacular*, the Goblin war between the Hobgoblin and Green Goblin heats up to a climax in July. As for August, all the Spidey titles cross over in preparation of...

DOWN THE ROAD: History comes to an end! By September, the current era of Spider-Man will draw to a close, allowing John Byrne to gear up his *Twice Told Tales* mini-series, which retells and revamps Spidey's origin and first years of superheroism. Then, prepare for the restart of *Amazing* (by Howard Mackie and Byrne), *Peter Parker* (by Mackie and John Romita Jr.) and *Spectacular Spider-Man* (in a *Legends of the Dark Knight* format) in November.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Inside Hollywood guys are saying that thanks to "Titanic"'s Oscar performance, it's getting more and more likely that James Cameron's next big pic will put the arachnid guy on the silver screen. Just don't hold your breath.

THIS JUNE...
FIND OUT WHAT EVERYONE'S BEEN SCREAMING ABOUT!
FUN!
EXCITEMENT!
HORROR!
THE 10TH #10
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY CREATOR: TONY DANIEL
INKED BY SALEEM CRAWFORD
COLORED BY PAUL MOUNTS
CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.THE10TH.COM
image
Monthly, Baby!
KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THE VARIANT COVER!
DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YA!
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sources for help, and may even run into the Purple Marauder before their escape's all said and done.

RAMPAGING HULK

Set in the Hulk's savage past, the new villain, The Shape–a monstrous threat whose creation Bruce Banner's partly responsible for–debuts in issue #2. Also, look for a guest appearance by the Fantastic Four of that era, as well as a fully fleshed-out Glen Talbot, Betty Ross, General Thunderbolt Ross, along with plenty of new characters and action.

ROBIN

Robin and Spoiler finally go on a date together to a sci-fi movie marathon in issue #57, however. Chuemaster and Phil Parsons' Crime School just may ruin their evening. The surprise ending of that issue feeds directly into *Robin* #58's "The Stranger," a year-long storyline that'll have major repercussions in Robin's private life for the coming months.

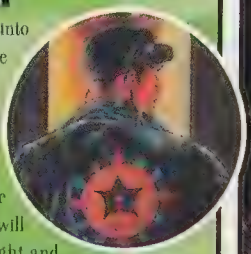
SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE

"The Goblin" kicks off in issue #65, the next four-issue arc telling the tale of a hideous child committing unspeakable crimes. Throughout the arc, Dian Belmont and Wesley Dodds seem to be...sniff...growing further apart. Look for a cast shake-up and a big guest-star coming in late '98.

SAVAGE DRAGON

She-Dragon takes the spotlight for a few issues following #50's big-time death issue and Dragon's subsequent recuperation. Look for a whole bag o' fun including Hercules and the God Squad invading Earth in search of descendants of the gods, a Dragon impostor and more adventures with the Special Operations Strikeforce.

STARMAN



As Jack heads into space for the next 10 or so issues, we see the seeds of Opal City's fate in #46. The space storyline will take Jack Knight and Mikaal (the blue guy) to a buncha planets and have them meet DC's space-set, including Space Cabbie, Adam Strange and Thom Kallor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 74

SUPERMAN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAMS: Stuart Immonen and José Marzan Jr. (*Action Comics*); Dan Jurgens, Ron Frenz and Joe Rubinstein (*Superman*); Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove and Dennis Janke (*Superman: The Man of Steel*); Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett and Denis Rodier (*Adventures of Superman*); Louise Simonson, Paul Ryan and Brett Breeding (*Superman: The Man of Tomorrow*)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: After being split into two beings and reintegrating into the one, true Superman, Clark Kent thought his life was back to normal. Yeah, right. Just as he returned, Supes was thrust into four different eras–the '70s, the '60s, W.W.II, and the year 3000.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Superman's time-spanning adventures continue while he starts noticing clues that suggest a single ominous presence is behind his recent troubles. But will he be able to escape from four different eras to return reality to its rightful state? (We'd bet yes.)

DOWN THE ROAD: *Superman: Save the Planet* sees the *Daily Planet* fall prey to its greatest business adversary. (Hmm...who could that possibly be?) As a result, Kent loses his job, Perry White goes back to teaching and Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen land jobs with LexCom.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Thanks to Superman's 60th anniversary, look for more Super-specials like *Superman: War of the Worlds*, *Superman: The Dark Side*, *Superman: Life* and a *Superman 3-D Special*. Then there's cool merchandise like September's Kingdom Come Superman statue designed and sculpted by Alex Ross, as well as October's Superman S-shield ring, which may be the start of a new series of DC rings. And finally, there's rumblings that DC's planning a massive overhaul of all its Superman books.

THOR

CREATIVE TEAM: Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Back on Earth following "Heroes Return," Thor's taken on the mortal guise of paramedic Jake Olson, a change he's still getting used to. Along with active duty as an Avenger, Thor's already battled the Destroyer and learned he can't go home again. Asgard's in ruins, its artifacts scattered across creation, and gods long gone. Who did it and why? That's what the Thunder God wants to know.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: *Thor* #3 sets up the status quo on Earth, and introduces several supporting characters that'll all play roles in Olson and Thor's life. A new villain will be introduced, leading to a battle through issue #5, and the public gets a chance to be heard with #6, as folks call in to a radio talk show explaining how Thor's seen through different eyes.

DOWN THE ROAD: Look for Thor to dig into the mystery of what happened to Asgard with #7, a story that will last through #12, and guest-star Hercules. Also, things won't be all cheery for the Olson/Thor combo. Expect conflicts as Thor has to balance his civilian responsibilities with his godhood and Avengers activities. And hey, look for Dr. Doom to show his ugly mug soon as well.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Forsooth! Jurgens plans on keeping Thor's speech at a higher level than your average hero (but not unreadable), something that will imply Thor's godhood.

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(Star Boy in the Legion). Knight will finally figure out what happened to Will Payton and Prince Gavyn, and return to a devastated Opal around issue #56.

STRANGERS IN PARADISE

Francine has an issue-long dream in #16, inspired by her favorite TV show, which makes room for issue #17 to kick off a new story arc for the series as Katchoo, Francine and David all move in together. Who cracks first? Who cries first? Who sleeps with whom first? Maybe moving in together wasn't the best idea in the world....

SUPERGIRL

Comet, the horse/guy's secret is revealed as is the identity of the second of three Earth angels. Look for the Female Furies, Ember (the angel who previously had Supergirl's job) and a new guy named the Carnivore, who wants to use Supergirl to extort his way into Heaven. Plus, Linda gets whupped by Wally (the boy who thinks he's a god).

TRANSMETROPOLITAN

The six-part "The Year of the Bastard" storyline kicks off with #13. It seems the president, whom Spider Jerusalem...um...upset in the men's room in #4, runs for re-election, forcing Jerusalem to mount a serious resistance in what quickly becomes the dirtiest political contest in history. Look for Jae Lee covers on #13-#15, and Dave Gibbons covers on #16-#18.

VAMPIRELLA

The Vampirella/Shi crossover runs through #7-#9, teaming up the two deadly ladies to find Shi's kidnapped friend, who'll one day play a major role in the vampire apocalypse on the horizon. The crossover is Grant Morrison and Mark Millar's swan song on the book, so look for a new writer to debut on the title with #10, and build towards the culmination of the apocalypse in #12.

X-FACTOR

Tensions finally boil over with Forge's departure, heading into a whole new slant on the team with #150. No longer hiding in the shadows, X-Factor's out in public to fulfill Xavier's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 76

THUNDERBOLTS

CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Vince Russell

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Their cover as heroes long blown, the Thunderbolts are on the lam, hunted by every law enforcement agency around, from S.H.I.E.L.D. to the Avengers (and even the Lightningrods). As for Baron Zemo, the crater-faced tyrant still hasn't come to grips with his team's betrayal and ain't gonna let 'em off the hook so easily.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: The Crimson Cowl and her Masters of Evil return in #18-#20, offering a startling revelation that could break up the 'Bolts. Ish #20 also deals with who'll lead the team, as no one trusts Moonstone, while Jolt, the only T-bolt *without* a record, is too young. Also, Songbird and Mach-1's relationship takes an unexpected turn in #21.

DOWN THE ROAD: *Thunderbolts* #22 serves as a prelude to the Avengers/Thunderbolts battle over in Avengers #12, when Hercules comes gunning for Goliath (now Atlas), who beat him into coma a while back. Following the Avengers fight, the 'Bolts head off in a new direction, and may finally be recognized as the heroes they really are. To test their new resolve, look for the Masters of Evil to return yet again. Man, that Crimson Cowl just doesn't quit.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: The buzz surrounding the T-Bolts continues to grow, so be sure to check out the Avengers/Thunderbolts novel coming later this year, and keep your eyes peeled for a Thunderbolts trade paperback, reprinting early Thunderbolts appearances in other Marvel books.

WITCHBLADE

CREATIVE TEAM: Christina Z., David Wohl and a to-be-determined artist

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Stripped of the Witchblade, Sara Pezzini's accepted life without the magical gauntlet, but is still haunted by images of the Witchblade. Also, storm clouds are forming on the horizon, and somehow the sinister D. Gavin Taylor's First Church of Holy Prosperity fits into the whole scheme. Meanwhile, Ian Nottingham, who took the Witchblade from Sara, just may be losing control of it.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: As Taylor's plans become more apparent, Sara starts to realize his insidious nature and blatant disregard for human life. On the personal side, Ian loses control of the gauntlet, but surprisingly, Sara isn't its first choice of wielders. Meanwhile, a Jake McCarthy/Sara relationship may finally be working out, and Sara discovers that Taylor may have been involved in her father's death.

DOWN THE ROAD: The connection between Ken Irons and Taylor becomes more apparent, as Sara gets closer to the truth about who was responsible for her dad's death. Also, the Witchblade's still out there, but will it come back to Pezzini, or will it stay with a new wielder?

THE INSIDE SCOOP: With its *Tales of the Witchblade* and *Tales of the Darkness* series, Top Cow is establishing a coherent Witchblade/Darkness timeline, one rife with confrontations between the two weapons. Check out this fall's crossover between the two *Tales of...* books, featuring a battle between the Witchblade and Darkness set in the time of the Spanish Inquisition.

1998

August

A whole new world of comics, a whole new comic company from

— Whilce Portacio —
(Iron Man, Wetworks, Uncanny X-men)

&

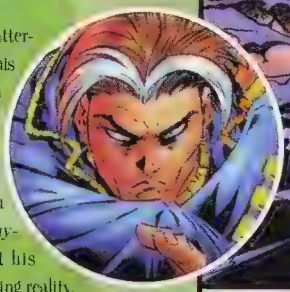
— Brian Haberlin —
(Witchblade, Spawn)

dream by whatever means necessary. But since different members have different agendas, will internal conflicts destroy them before they get the chance?

X-FORCE

Artist Adam Pollina leaves with issue #81, the big Hawaiian blowout. Also, look for Sam Guthrie (Cannonball) to return, but not necessarily to the team, since Meltdown (his former squeeze) has been getting it on with Sunspot. The team will then tie a little closer with the core X-books as they work with the Mutant Underground Railroad, a covert system that helps rescue and relocate persecuted mutants.

X-MAN



Following the shattering discovery that his imminent death will take half the world with him, Nate Grey goes on a desperate search for something, *anything* to prevent his vision from becoming reality. Look for Madelyne Pryor and Threnody to return, as well as a mysterious artifact to appear that just might be the most important thing in the world. Or is that in *two* worlds?

YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE

Bonfire and Monster Girl finally have it out. Off-Ramp and Frostbite clash. Junior and Zip-Kid have a big fight and Junior finally gets some! Also, we'll learn more about Monster Girl as aliens start invading, something Bonfire might've inadvertently helped along. Following #1,000,000, a relationship will start to develop between two of the most unlikely team members ever.

YOUNG JUSTICE

Robin, Impulse and Superboy (along with an annoyed Red Tornado) have a sleepover in the JLA's original cave HQ, and inadvertently discover a long-buried Whiz Wagon. Things get cooking when the Sex Kitten and Rip Roar, the Whiz Wagon's owner, attack. Then look for Arrowette, Wonder Girl and the all-new Secret to make their presence felt on the team. ■

WOLVERINE

CREATIVE TEAM: Chris Claremont (through #128), Todd Dezago (#129–#132), Erik Larsen (#133–#138 or more), Leinil Francis Yu, Edgar Tadeo and TBD

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Just when he thought things couldn't get any worse, Wolverine battled off an attack from his closest friends, who'd been brainwashed by Viper to kill him. But hey, he's used to that, right? Well, follow that up with an all-or-nothing fight with Sabretooth, and you figure the guy deserves a break right?

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Right! Guest-stars abound over the summer as Sabretooth actually takes center stage. Meanwhile, Kitty Pryde, HYDRA and the Hand all circle 'round Wolvie's world. And while the big secret is *still* a big secret, the *Wolverine* team promises that the fate of the adamantium formerly bonded to Wolverine's bones will be finalized. No, really. This time they mean it.

DOWN THE ROAD: Todd Dezago (*Sensational Spider-Man*) takes over for four issues, and Erik Larsen (*Savage Dragon*) comes on for at least a six-issue stint that'll involve Wolvie being controlled by an escapee from a prison planet. Looks like Wolverine's summer break ain't gonna last too long.

THE INSIDE SCOOP: This summer's guest-star extravaganza will bring a character to the forefront who'll be playing a crucial role in *Fantastic Four* sometime later this year.

X-MEN BOOKS

CREATIVE TEAMS: Joe Kelly, Adam Kubert, Alan Davis and Mark Farmer (*X-Men*); Steven T. Seagle, Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend (*Uncanny X-Men*)

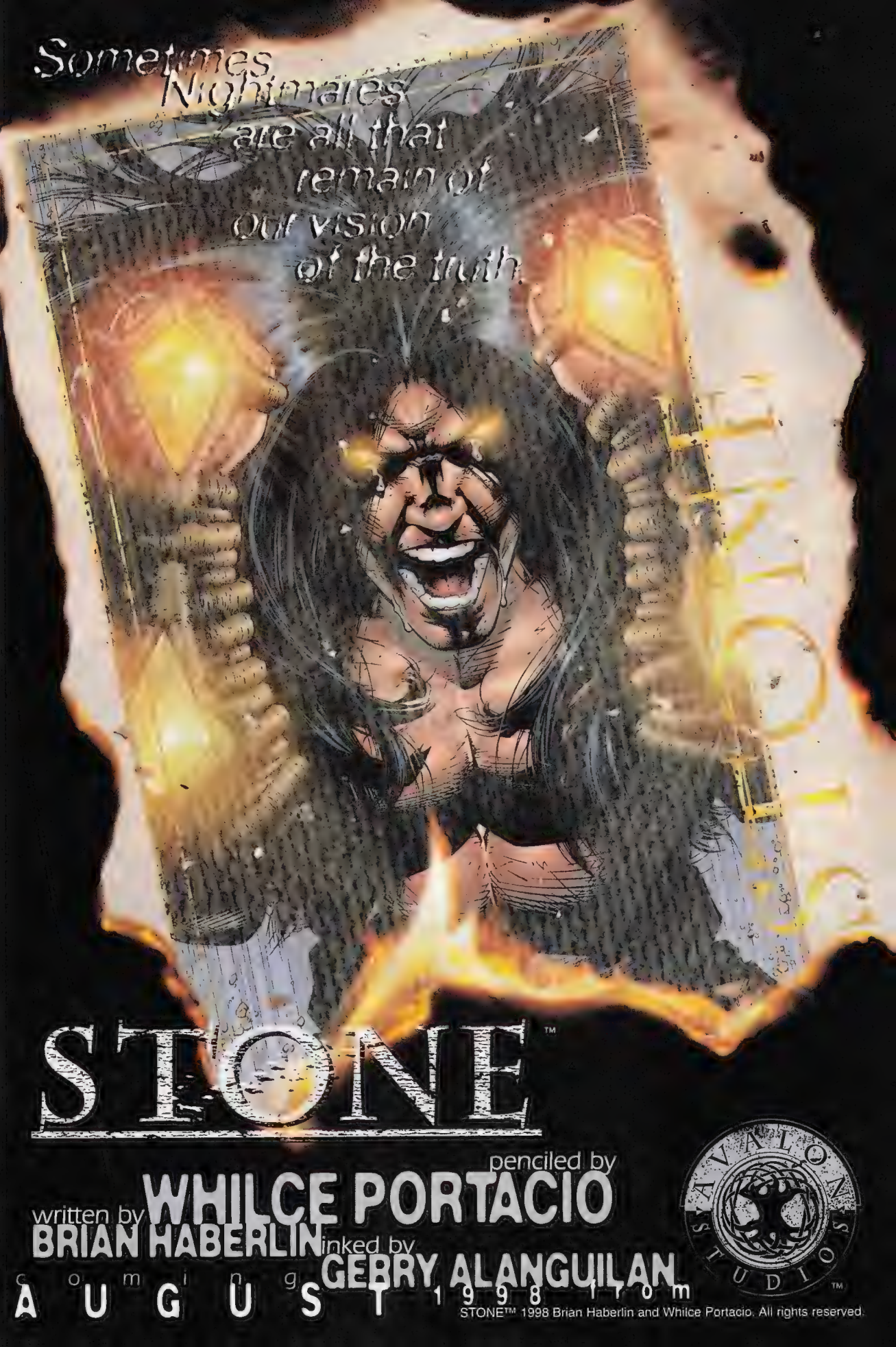
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Since surviving Zero Tolerance, the X-Men's lives have been far from easy. Adding to the unease is Jean's recent decision to wear her old Phoenix uniform, something that has more than a few bad memories attached. Also, the team has traveled to Africa, where Storm's been called upon to fulfill a family obligation.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN: Oho-boy! The X-Men reunite only to be attacked by . . . the X-Men!? In a move you *never* saw coming, one of the X-Men's oldest allies turns on them, and just may have the power to wipe 'em out. At the conclusion of the battle, look for a streamlined team of seven members who will appear in both books, tightening continuity between the two titles. In addition, an old friend may make a return to the ranks and round the team out at eight members.

DOWN THE ROAD: The fall leads the X-Men into even darker times as the connection between Joseph and Magneto is clarified even further, bringing the X-Men into a major conflict with their oldest foe who's more determined than ever to advance the plight of Homo superior. Also, in a slight bit of good news, the Legacy Virus just might make its final appearance ever, but at what cost?

THE INSIDE SCOOP: Word on the street has it that in the next two years or so, John Byrne may be starting an all-new X-Men title filling in the gap between issues *X-Men* (vol. 1) #66 and *Giant-Size X-Men* #1. (Marvel simply ran reprints of earlier *X-Men* issues for #67–#93.)

North Carolina-based freelancer Matthew Brady knows too much.


Sometimes Nightmares are all that remain of our vision of the truth
STONE™
penciled by
WHILCE PORTACIO
written by
BRIAN HABERLIN
inked by
GEBRY ALANGUILAN
coming
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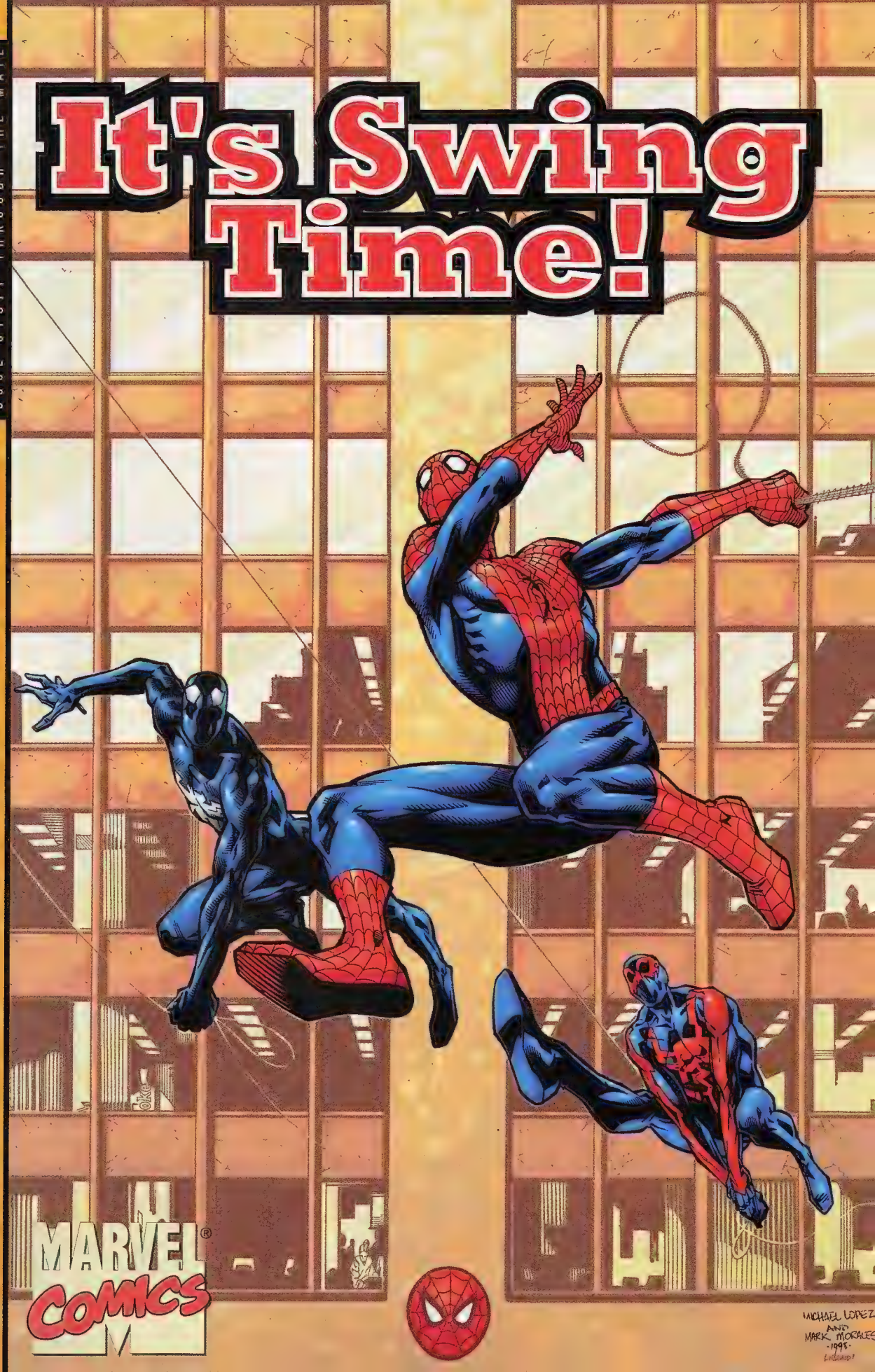

WIZARD #1/2 OFFER

SPIDER-MAN®

It's Spider-Man as you haven't seen him in a long time, so don't miss the opportunity! Trapped by villain Norman Osborn, Spidey fights his way back from near-death. Along the way, he encounters Norman's son Harry and together they see Spider-Man's past, present and future—including Spidey's black costume and the 2099 version of Spider-Man!

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Within the Spider-Man #1/2, you'll find these goodies:

- A brand-new story written by Tom DeFalco and drawn by Rick Leonardi!
- A Spider-Man story that takes the Web-slinger from his past, through the present and into the future!
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- And the most amazing morsel of all—this is a Spider-Man story you won't find anywhere else! This exclusive comic is available through this one-time *Wizard* offer only!

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THIS OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 25, 1998

CASTING call

WIZARD casts the DEADPOOL MOVIE!

This one's a killer.

The scarred mercenary Deadpool is a twisted, wisecracking gun-for-hire. He's a right and proper badass who can't be bought, but can definitely be rented. He's currently racking up an impressive body count in Marvel's *Deadpool* comic, but we can only hope he's got his gunsights fixed on a major motion picture.

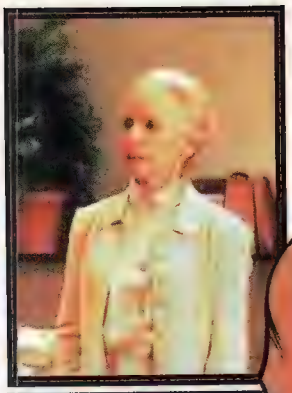
High adventure and low comedy would set "Deadpool: The Movie" on the fast track to Hollywood success. On a quest to find himself, the antihero Deadpool would hook up with a motley band that includes a mealy-mouthed arms dealer, a beautiful superheroine straight outta someone's wildest dreams and a feeble, blind woman with a mean streak eight miles wide.

Killer humor, killer adventure and a killer hero—what more could anyone want? Well, maybe just the following killer cast...

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

HENRY ROLLINS as DEADPOOL

If we didn't let the gruff, insanely frenzied, sandpaper-throated rock crooner Henry Rollins play the psychotic Deadpool, he'd come to our house and punch our puppy. Seriously.



ANNE HANEY as BLIND ALFRED

Blind as Ray Charles and twisted as a pretzel, Alfred is both Deadpool's captive and his tormentor. With an abundance of old-lady charm, all Anne Haney ("Liar Liar") needs to play Alfred is a pair of cheap Ray-Bans.

WILFORD BRIMLEY as DR. KILLBREW

Everyone's favorite grampa Wilford Brimley ("Cocoon") is, pardon the pun, a dead ringer for portly scientist Dr. Killbrew. Casting him in this role is just the right thing to do.

GUY PEARCE as WEASEL

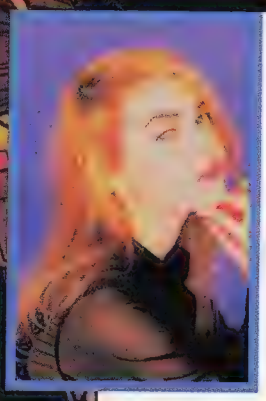
Arms-dealing sleaze Weasel is the friend Deadpool just doesn't need. We scraped the bottom of the barrel to get Guy Pearce ("L.A. Confidential") to skulk about as our favorite slimy slug.

MICHAEL JETER as PATCH

Michael Jeter ("Evening Shade") just looks like a comic book character. He also looks a lot like Deadpool's sometime employer Patch. Natch, he's a lock.

NICOLE EGGERT as EXPEDITER

The lovely and talented Nicole Eggert could throw away her old "Baywatch" swimsuit for Expediter's form-fitting spandex suit. Male audience members would, subsequently, toss away their car keys and permanently move into movie theaters playing "Deadpool."



KATE WINSLET as SIRYN

Four out of five dentists trapped on a deserted island recommend Kate Winslet ("Titanic") to play the spunky, Irish, take-no-prisoners object of Deadpool's desires, Siryn. We agree.

CHRIS JERICHO as T-RAY

Beefy, egomaniacal WCW wrestler Chris Jericho is salty like a Christmas ham. As a foil for Deadpool, Jericho would climb to the top rope and soar like a bird.

BEN CROSS as OVERBOSS DIXON

Shady like a pine, Overboss Dixon's got his hand in many a cookie jar. Check out Ben Cross' role as an evil would-be king in "First Knight" to see a medieval Dixon done in living color.

ROBIN TUNNEY as TYPHOID MARY

The house that dripped blood ain't one-eighth as scary as this picture of Robin Tunney ("The Craft"). Think she can play a vicious killer like Typhoid Mary? Let's just say, the picture doesn't lie.

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®

STEEL CAGE

Nicolas Cage climbs into the ring as Superman

With his sunken eyes and receding hairline, actor **Nicolas Cage** doesn't look the part of Superman—the all-American icon of strength, power and rugged good looks.

But then again, who thought the diminutive Michael Keaton was the ideal Batman nine years ago?

Cage—who's played such diverse parts as an alcoholic ("Leaving Las Vegas"), an ex-con ("Con Air") and a groom-to-be with cold feet ("Honeymoon in Vegas")—steps into a role made famous by Christopher Reeve some 20 years ago when he enters the Man of Steel's boots in the tentatively titled "Superman Lives." The movie, originally slated to start filming July 6 and soar into theaters next summer, is currently in the midst of delays due to script revisions.

Director **Tim Burton**, who helped elevate the first two Batman films into two of the biggest summer blockbusters in history, joins Cage in the $100-plus-million-budget production.

But the biggest surprise surrounds the selection of Cage, an Academy Award-winning actor who's rumored to be earning $20 million to play the Last Son of Krypton. Cage isn't worried, though. In fact, he relishes the idea that he doesn't look like the All-American type.

"I like the fact that I don't look like Superman," Cage admitted. "I mean, I've always felt that I'm Everyman. And I think that Everyman can be Superman. That's the beauty of the character, in my opinion. Anybody can be Superman in their mind."

Burton represents less of a gamble for Warner Bros. He's already delivered with the "Batman" films, developing the Caped Crusader into a moneymaking franchise. But Cage sees something more in Burton.

"I think Tim Burton is the perfect director," he said, "because he's always been very sensitive about the outsider. Superman is a great story. It's one of those phenomenons that operates on so many different levels that still haven't been explored. One of the things I like about Superman is the notion of nurture versus nature. Is he more Kryptonian or is he more the Kents, his adopted parents? These are big issues that we're thinking about now, like genetics, and scientific things of that nature."

But not to worry. There are some levels of the Superman myth that can't be fooled with; no deep intellectual changes to some of the basics.

"I think the Superman costume will still be the classic costume," Cage said.

SUPER PHOTO Take Nic Cage's head, slap it on Christopher Reeve's body, and presto, instant new Superman.

HEAD SHOT: NICOLAS CAGE © ROB BROWN/OUTLINE. BODY SHOT: SUPERMAN BODY, FOTO FANTASIES.

"Which I think is important. Because I, like many people, am a fan of Americana and pop culture. I like the shape of the Coca-Cola bottle. I think they should stay true to the Superman costume."

Sure, Cage may not physically look the part, but what he does best is explore his characters' mindsets and what makes them tick. With Superman, the actor plans to explore the fact that Superman is different; he's an outsider. And that's a feeling many people can relate to, whether they have superpowers or not.

"I remember what I felt like as a child in school being teased," Cage said. "And if there's one kid out there who's being called a weirdo or a freak and he goes home, and he's just not having a good day in his life, and his life at school is hell—if he sees Superman, and he says, 'Well, Superman is a weirdo. He's considered different. Maybe I'm Superman,' that's enough for me to feel good about making the movie. That was the vision I got from it."

While Cage is certain about his approach to the character, less certain is the film's script. "Chasing Amy" director and comic writer **Kevin Smith** wrote an early draft for the film, which was scrapped, along with a version by Wesley Strick ("The Saint"). Akiva Goldsman ("Lost in Space") is currently working with Burton and producer Jon Peters on what could be the final script, with rumors that it may be based on the "Death of Superman" storyline from the comics.

"Kevin did an excellent job," Cage said of Smith's script, "but there were some other character ideas that they wanted to increase. It had some very good structural moments and fantasy aspects in it, but the character wasn't developed. Originally, the death of Superman was what was there. But I haven't read the new script yet."

Cage does know who he'd like as the villain of the new film, though. "There are negotiations for **Kevin Spacey** to play **Lex Luthor**," he said, grinning. "[Jack] Nicholson would be a great Lex. But so would Kevin. We'll see what Tim comes up with."

Also rumored to be major contenders for roles are Chris Rock as Jimmy Olsen and Cameron Diaz as Lois Lane.

Regardless of who his co-stars are, Cage has one single-minded goal, a very clear idea of what he wants to do with the character of Superman.

"I want to examine the myth of Superman, and what I could do differently with it," he said. "I feel that we're going into a new millennium, and Superman needs to be a new kind of Superman. So I would like to redesign the whole concept of Superman." ■ **JENNY PETERS**

REWIND

THE SUPERMAN MOVIES REVIEWED

FILM	PLOT	BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS	RATING*
SUPERMAN (1978)	Besides running through Supes' Kryptonian origin and early days in Smallville, we get to see Clark Kent arrive in Metropolis, become Superman and foil Lex Luthor's earthquake plot.	$82.8 million	Christopher Reeve made us believe a man *can* fly. A pre-chunky Marlon Brando added some seriousness as Superman's papa, Jor-El. Lois Lane's death scene. Superman drilling into the subway. Supes flying around the world to reverse time. Gene Hackman's maniacal Lex Luthor. Everything about this film was classic.
SUPERMAN II (1980)	As the romance heats up between Clark Kent and Lois Lane, Superman must overcome the loss of his powers and fight three superpowered villains who escape from the Kryptonian Phantom Zone.	$65.1 million	Super butt-kicking! Superman takes on *three* superpowered Phantom Zone criminals in one awesome downtown brawl! While this sequel was high on action, the added cheesiness and new superpowers (the cellophane S-shield on Supes' chest, the amnesia-inducing kiss he gives Lois, etc.) knocked it down a peg.
SUPERMAN III (1983)	Then-hot comedian Richard Pryor plays a computer whiz who falls under the command of Robert Vaughn's bad guy, who wants to use technology to control Superman.	$37.2 million	This unfunny comedy saw Pryor ski off a roof and create a faulty synthetic Kryptonite by substituting tar for a missing ingredient. Sure, Annette O'Toole brought Lana Lang to life, but the rest of this so-called film, with its lackluster villains and super-lame supercomputer, added up to a super disappointment.
SUPERMAN IV: The Quest for Peace (1987)	Superman tries to rid the world of nuclear weapons, while Lex Luthor creates Nuclear Man, a nuclear-powered villain, to (What else?) fight the Man of Steel.	$18.2 million	Super-insulting! Nuclear Man's a loser villain with long black fingernails. Luthor's annoying nephew turned Lex into a parental parody. Right out of a bad "Brady Bunch" episode, Mariel Hemingway's character and Clark double-dated with Lois and Superman, as Supes conveniently ran in and out of the room. And Superman's "no nukes" quest saw him gather the missiles in a net and toss 'em into the sun. Too bad this film didn't join 'em.

*RATING KEY: SUPER-FLY ⟷ SUPER-DUD

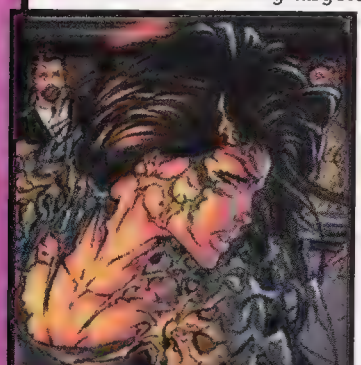
SUPERMAN IV PHOTO COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES. ALL OTHER SUPERMAN MOVIE PHOTOS COURTESY OF DC COMICS AND WARNER BROTHERS.

THE WITCHING HOUR

Top Cow's 'Witchblade' cuts into TNT this fall

TNT has added some dynamite to its lineup. After weeks of speculation, the cable network announced that it is has put a "Witchblade" live-action television series, based on the Top Cow comics, on its 1998-99 production slate.

A two-hour "Witchblade" movie, which will incorporate the character's origin, will kick off the series next year, possibly as early as January. Sources said "Witchblade" is being targeted to air Wednesdays at 8 p.m. (EST), following TNT's newly acquired reruns of "ER." The role of Witchblade had not been cast at press time.



WHICH CHANNEL IS WITCH? Live-action "Witchblade" hits cable TV's TNT next year.

The series will be produced by Oliver Stone's Illusion Entertainment for Warner Bros. Domestic Television. According to Top Cow founder **Marc Silvestri**, he'll be very involved with the show, as will Top Cow president Brad Foxhoven, Editor-in-Chief **David Wohl** and *Witchblade* artist **Michael Turner**.

"Every one of our partners has made it very apparent, especially Oliver, that it's Top Cow's show to run," Silvestri said.

"We're going to try to stay very faithful to the comic," Dan Halstead from Illusion added. "That's why Marc is one of the executive producers."

Originally intended for syndication, the cable-bound "Witchblade" will now benefit from being on at the same time across the country, as well as on the same network.

"With someone like TNT, we would be a main event for them," Wohl said. "There's so much to say about being the marquis show of a network, like 'South Park' on Comedy Central or 'La Femme Nikita' on USA Network."

Plans are for "Witchblade" to include characters that appeared in the first eight issues of the comic, including, of course, Sara Pezzini, a New York police detective who obtains a mystical and powerful gauntlet.

"The special effects will be tough, since we have certain budgetary restraints," Foxhoven said. "Sara won't be running around with the gauntlet on all the time. When she uses it, it will have to be worth it visually. We don't want any cheese."

Halstead said, "The template has been 'The X-Files,' where the effects are reality-based. We're going for that approach more than an approach like 'Xena.'" ■ **ROB ALLSTETTER**

NEW BATMAN ADVENTURES

Animated 'Mad Love' and 'Dark Knight' on the way

Batman's producers are going mad...and loving it. The men behind the "Batman" animated series on Kids' WB! have finally adapted DC Comics' Harvey and Eisner award-winning *Batman: Mad Love* for an episode late in the 1998-99 season. The comic, by "Batman" producers **Paul Dini** and **Bruce Timm**, tells the origin of the Joker's main squeeze, Harley Quinn.

"I always said I didn't think it was going to work on TV simply because it didn't have enough action in it. It surprisingly does," Timm said. "On the old Fox network, we would have never gotten away with it. It's just way too intense, too sexy, too psychological and too violent. "But I'm very happy with the compromises we made to bring it to the air. It's going to be very close to the comic—not quite as risqué, but I have high hopes for this one."

"Mad Love" is just one of 16 new "Batman" episodes planned for next season, though. There's plenty more in store, including a "Legends of the Dark Knight" episode which serious Bat-fans won't want to miss.

"I had an idea that there were all these interpretations of Batman, and to one degree or another, they're all pretty valid," Timm said. "I don't have a problem reconciling the old Adam West [TV] Batman with ["Batman Forever"] Val Kilmer or with our show. I was thinking, 'Wouldn't it be fun to do an episode where part of the episode was done in [1950s] Dick Sprang style and a part was done in **Frank Miller** [*The Dark Knight Returns*] style?' So that's what we did."

REV UP YOUR HARLEY The origin of the Joker's #1 moll gets animated.

According to Timm, the episode centers around a group of kids talking about what Batman's really like. Since he's rarely seen and his picture's never in the paper, he's a mysterious figure.

"So the youngest kid in the group tells his version of what he thinks Batman is like," Timm said, "and it's this goofy, old Dick Sprang kind of story, drawn in his style. Then the oldest kid in the group says, 'Nah. You've got it all wrong. He's old and he's really scary.' And he basically tells the story, drawn in Frank Miller style. In the third act, the kids get to see who the 'real' Batman is, and it's a little bit of both."

Other "Batman" highlights for next season include "Old Wounds," a fill-in-the-gaps episode which shows how Dick Grayson (former Robin/current Nightwing) split from Bruce Wayne; two new villains, Roxy Rocket and Firefly, in separate episodes; an appearance by the Creeper; and a Batgirl/Supergirl team-up. ■ **RA**

TRAILERS...

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION?

'SOUTH PARK' ROCKS: Rick Rubin is producing a series of soundtracks from Comedy Central's "South Park" for Columbia Records. The series' second season began on May 20 with the first of six new episodes.

SUBCULTURE

TOP COW CARTOON: Nathan Cabrera's animated series, "SubCulture," long in development with Top Cow, remains alive at Mainframe Entertainment. "'SubCulture' is headed for prime time, hopefully," Top Cow's Brad Foxhoven said. "We are looking to have a promo reel in about two months."

FORCE WITH FOX: 20th Century Fox has entered into an agreement with Lucasfilm Ltd. to distribute the next three "Star Wars" films, which are prequels to the original "Star Wars" trilogy. "Episode I," shot in England last summer, is currently in post-production at Skywalker Ranch and Industrial Light & Magic in Marin County, Calif. The film is expected to hit theaters in May 1999.

HA ON SPAWN: Comics artist Gene Ha (*Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix*) has been brought on by Todd McFarlane to work on the third season of HBO's "Spawn" animated series. "I am doing character designs," Ha said. "[I'll be] mainly working with Terry [Fitzgerald] and Wanda [Simmons]. Todd asked me to try and make the characters look more realistic. He wants a tighter, lively look for the show."

SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT: Mark Dacascos ("The Island of Dr. Moreau") has been cast in the lead role of Eric Draven in the upcoming syndicated television series, "The Crow–Stairway to Heaven." Twenty-two episodes of the first season will be filmed in Vancouver. Bryce Zabel ("Dark Skies," "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman") is the executive producer.

Rob Zombie will not be directing the third Crow movie. A new director is now being sought for the next Crow feature.

SILVER FINALE: The 13th and final episode of the first season of Fox's "Silver Surfer" animated series is a cliffhanger called "The End of Eternity." The show, which features Eternity and Infinity, has Thanos succeeding in destroying the universe. Uh oh.

JLA BOOTLEG: The "Justice League of America" two-hour pilot is now showing up in illegally copied form at conventions, giving fans the chance to see why it'll probably never air on CBS. *JLA* writer Mark Waid said of the film, "It's 70 minutes of your life you'll never get back."

JUST LAUGH ALREADY The infamous "JLA" pilot brings TV superheroes to a new low.

SHORT TAKES: Top Cow's *The Darkness* and *Spirit of the Tao* are being looked at as feature films....*Daily Variety* reported that producer Chris Columbus would like Sam Hamm ("Batman") to work on the rewrite of the "Fantastic Four" script....The "Nick Fury" telefilm remains unscheduled, though it'll likely air this summer....The Cartoon Network, bolstered by an hour of "Batman: The Animated Series" on weekdays, is up 41 percent in total household viewers from a year ago....Warner Bros. Online has launched the first-ever official Batman and Superman Website. Check out character bios, episode guides, video clips, games and plenty more at www.batman-superman.com....The "New Gods" animated feature film is in early stages of development at Warner Bros., according to writer Mark Evanier, who's serving as a creative consultant. ■ RA

THRILLER Randy Queen boogied down with the cast of "Buffy."

DANCING QUEEN

'Darkchylde' creator sinks teeth into 'Buffy'

Randy Queen's been bitten by the Hollywood bug. The *Darkchylde* creator appeared earlier this year on two episodes of WB's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" as an extra, dancing in the show's Bronze Club.

"Buffy" is shot just up the street from Queen in Torrence, Calif., so he dropped by one day to check out the set. He was soon recognized and eventually clawed his way into landing the bit part.

"Not a bad place to be, especially for someone locked to a drawing table 10 hours a day," Queen said. "It's a total racket, with all these hot girls, and you pick up some fun money." ■ RA

KEVIN SMITH WATCH

FACTS & FACES

Latest Sighting: March's Independent Spirit Awards in Santa Monica. Smith, wearing a Superman T-shirt under his black suit, took home a best-screenwriting trophy for "Chasing Amy."

Latest Comics Project: Writing the bitchin' adventures of Jay and Silent Bob in Oni Press' *Jay & Silent Bob* mini-series starting in July. "There's a connection to the movies here," said Smith. "This takes place between 'Chasing Amy' and 'Dogma,' and Jay and Bob appear in both movies." He's also contracted to write at least six issues of Marvel's *Daredevil* starting in September ("I've got all six issues outlined, and full plots on #1-#3"), and landed a writing gig on DC's *Green Arrow* sometime in the near future.

Latest Film: Currently in Pittsburgh, Penn., filming his latest flick "Dogma," a supernatural road-trip comedy starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, with Alanis Morissette providing the voice of God. "We're in the third week of shooting and we've got four weeks to go," said Smith. "We just finished up three night shoots in a row, which last till around six in the morning. Those get real tiring."

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

CONTEST

Halloween Party Time!

WANNA GO? HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE GOTTA DO. In 50 words or less, tell us why the heck you think you should be invited to our most-excellent Halloween party. Just why the heck should we let you come join in our fun? Are you the biggest *Wizard* fan on the planet? Is your costume the coolest thing on Earth? Are you willing to clean the bathroom when the party's over? You decide why you're worthy, and let us know. We'll pick the one entry we think deserves to come and play with us and send that person the mighty invitation. But, because many unspeakable things usually happen at these shindigs, you must be 18 years or older to win. So get writing, and get started on that Halloween costume. You can't come without one!

PRIZE

GRAND PRIZE (1): Join the *Wizard* Bullpen! One crazy *Wizard* fanatic wins the experience of a lifetime: transportation to and from Wizard Entertainment, two nights in a stylish hotel (or maybe just a Motel 6), the chance to actually work at *Wizard* for a day (And we mean work!) and the highlight of it all...the opportunity to attend the world famous, highly exclusive, *Wizard* Halloween Party! This is the party that your mother warned you about. There'll be Wizardites, celebrities galore and more silly superhero costumes than you ever thought possible. You never know, you may even wind up on "Entertainment Tonight!"*

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send it all to:

"Halloween Party Time!" Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

*Odds of actually appearing on "Entertainment Tonight": 1/∞

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT AND NO ONE THROWS A PARTY LIKE WE DO!

SCARY LEGAL STUFF

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, their immediate families and that poor guy from Dubuque who crashed the party last year and has yet to make it home. Dude, we told you not to drink that stuff. Print your name, date of birth (this is *mucho importante*), address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Halloween Party Time!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filing it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. No one gets out alive. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than August 28, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 14, 1998. This contest is only open to persons 18 years old or older.

To see the winner's name, available after August 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Halloween Party Time!" Winner List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Halloween Party Time!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JULY 31, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ E-mail Address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

BASIC TRAINING

TONY DANIEL SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW SPAWN

COURTESY OF TONY DANIEL

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

Welcome! I'm Tony Daniel, and this month I'll be showing you the basics of how to draw a certain character you may have heard of...SPAWN! You know, when they say "the clothes make the man," they ain't kidding here, folks. Every aspect of Spawn's costume is its own living, breathing entity. From the chains and skulls, to the tears in his long, ragged cape, Spawn is truly one incredible character. But of course you knew that already, so I'm here to show ya just how it's done. Now pick up those pencils and erasers, and let's hop to it!

Head Games

First up, let's take a real basic look at the shape of Spawn's head. Personally, I prefer the "light bulb" approach. Notice in Figure 1a how the chin's real narrow, but as we get to the top of the head, it's very round. The head's almost egg-shaped, but since the chin's a bit thinner, it looks kinda like a light bulb!

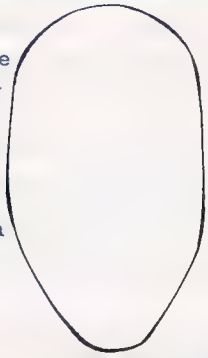
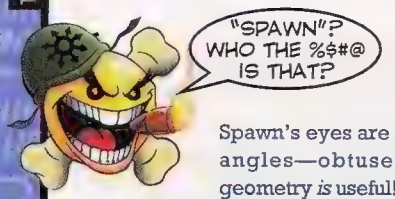


Fig. 1a



Spawn's eyes are easy to draw; they're just triangles—obtuse ones, to be exact. (See, geometry *is* useful!) You can play with the shape, giving him different expressions, but the primary shape should always be triangular.

Now for that...uh...thing around his eyes. It looks kinda like a bat wing, the way it glides up on either side and comes to an edgy point at the start of his brow. Just remember that each half needs to be symmetrical to the other. Don't make one bigger, fatter or skinnier than the other.

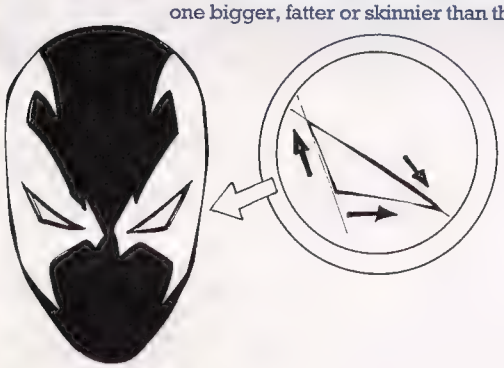


Fig. 1b

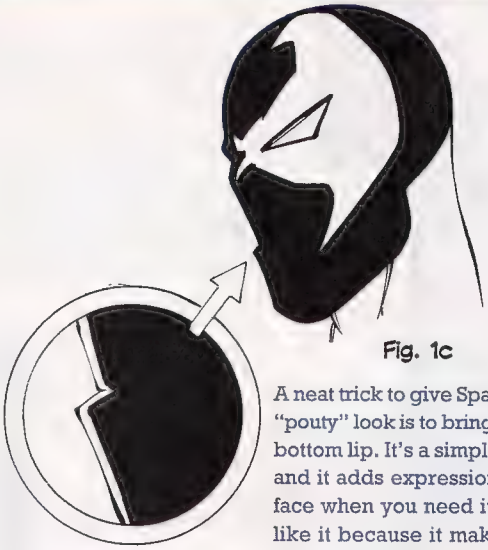


Fig. 1c

A neat trick to give Spawn that "pouty" look is to bring out his bottom lip. It's a simple effect and it adds expression to his face when you need it. I also like it because it makes him look "tough."

Fig. 1d

As for this last 3/4-angle headshot (Fig. 1d), this is a great example of when NOT to make both "bat wings" on his mask the same size. When you're drawing the part nearest to us, keep in mind where the cheekbone and brow area are located. This will help you in keeping the mask structure as realistic as possible.

Body by Al

Let's take a quick look at Spawn's basic frame. He's comparable in shape to Batman or Daredevil. In other words, don't make him too skinny or too bulky. He's got one big boot the shape of a tree stump (except it has huge spikes sprouting from it), and several wrist and arm bands—in thick leather with more huge spikes. When you're drawing the spikes, think of a tyrannosaurus' giant tooth.

...Only a Mother Could Love

Once you've got the mask down, try drawing Spawn without it. Two points to remember: 1) Spawn has no nose (most of the time) and 2) the uglier the better! He should look like he's in a constant state of decomposition. His flesh could peel off at any minute, and you need to convey that through the use of various textures. Toss some stubble on top of his head and you're done!

M Marks the Spot

That thing on Spawn's chest is actually the letter "M." (M? Standing for Malebolgia? Hmm...) Anyway, I find it easier to draw it as symmetrical by starting in the center of his chest and bringing the point downward, and then drawing the outer portions. Just like the bat wings on his mask usually are, both sides of the "M" are the same size. Also notice how the tips of the "M" right below his neck have a small hook to them.

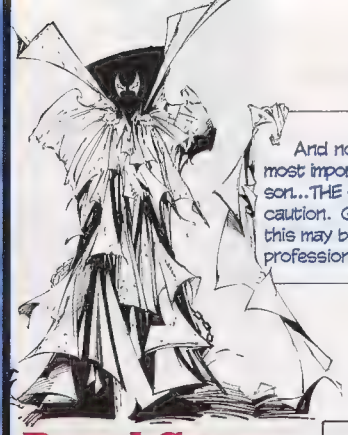
Belt Him One

Then there's the skull belt, located right below his navel. The surface should be bone, so add texture with a few jagged lines throughout the buckle. The real finishing touch is the teeth, which should look razor-sharp and ready to do damage.

From the skull, we have one chain link that goes to either side of its head, but it's all interconnected. If the chain were resting on the floor, it'd probably make a big circle. Which brings us to...

Unchained

CHINNG! Thapppp! Practice drawing Spawn's chains in different perspectives, but be consistent with the links. Draw them on the bulkier side, because you want to give the illusion of real power (especially when they're in action). NO WIMPY, SKINNY LINKS ALLOWED! Notice how in the lower right corner, the links are almost as big as the Clown, but as we get closer to where he actually gets hit, the chain link is in proportion to his body.



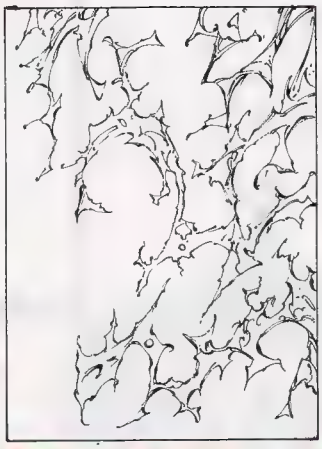
And now, troopers, for the most important part of this lesson...THE CAPE!!! Proceed with caution. Getting too good at this may be hazardous to some professional's job security!

Royal Cape

Here's what I call the "Royal" cape. It can change shape and can sometimes be as long as 100 feet. Don't get intimidated. First, approach it like it's a huge blanket. After you've drawn the basic shape, look for areas where you can add folds (they're really just triangles). The more you make, the more depth you add. Then add folds to those folds, and so on. You can never have too many! Also, notice the black areas, where all you see are a few triangles popping out.

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b



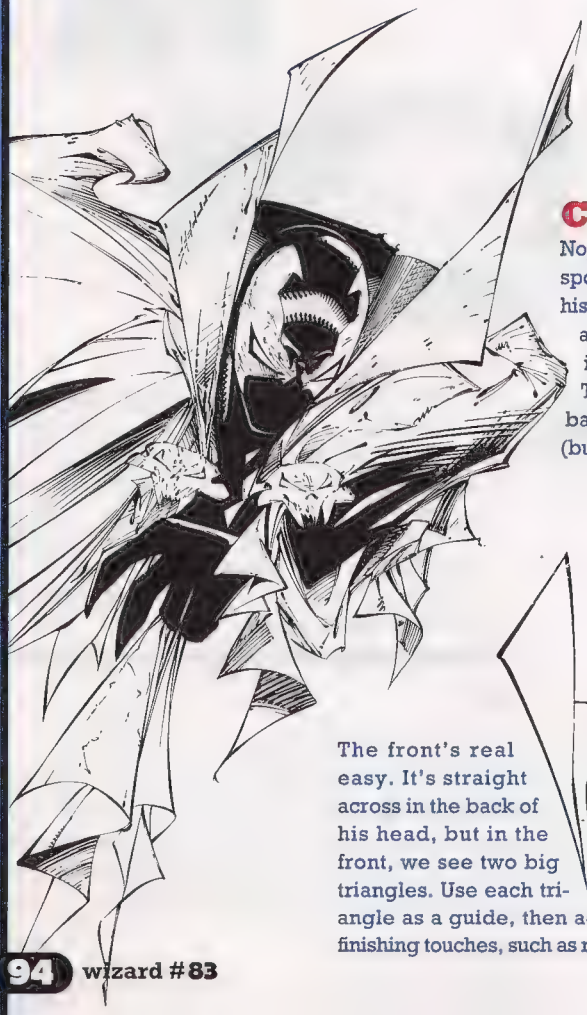
Ratty Cape

This is the current look of Spawn's cape. The thing to remember is texture. It should look like someone blasted the original with a shotgun. Using a basic long blanket shape, figure out how you might want the cape to blow in the wind or what areas you want looking alive. Then simply add folds to the cape that go in an opposite direction than the rest of the cape. Just imagine that your pencil's a giant moth eating your favorite sweater.

Fig. 3c

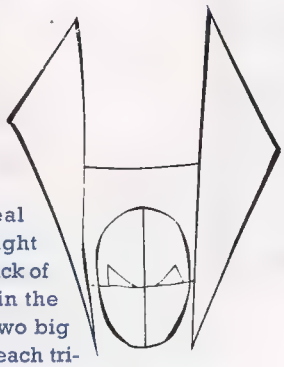
Royally Ratty

This one's a cross between the "Royal" and the "Ratty" versions, and it's my favorite. Start off with a lot of folds, and when you're done, go in and make the rips and tears. If you do the rips and tears first, you won't have a fluid and flowing cape. Always start out with the basic blanket shape and work out the folds from there. Then you can devour the fabric as much or as little as you want.

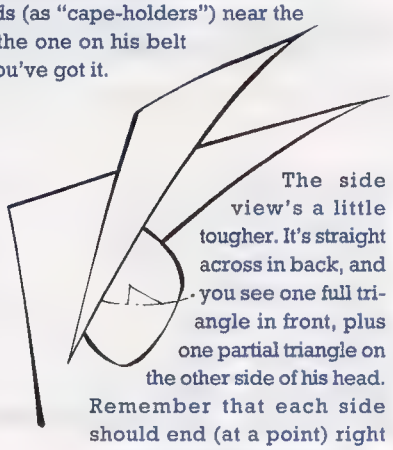


Cowling in Fear

Nope, you're not done just yet. There's still that dreaded spooky cowl, which starts at his neck and goes around his head. The two points of the cowl, go up pretty high, and like the cape, have triangular folds. If you look at it in terms of basic shapes, you'll find it easier to draw. Toss in two skull heads (as "cape-holders") near the base of his neck, like the one on his belt (but just smaller) and you've got it.



The front's real easy. It's straight across in the back of his head, but in the front, we see two big triangles. Use each triangle as a guide, then add your own finishing touches, such as rips and folds.

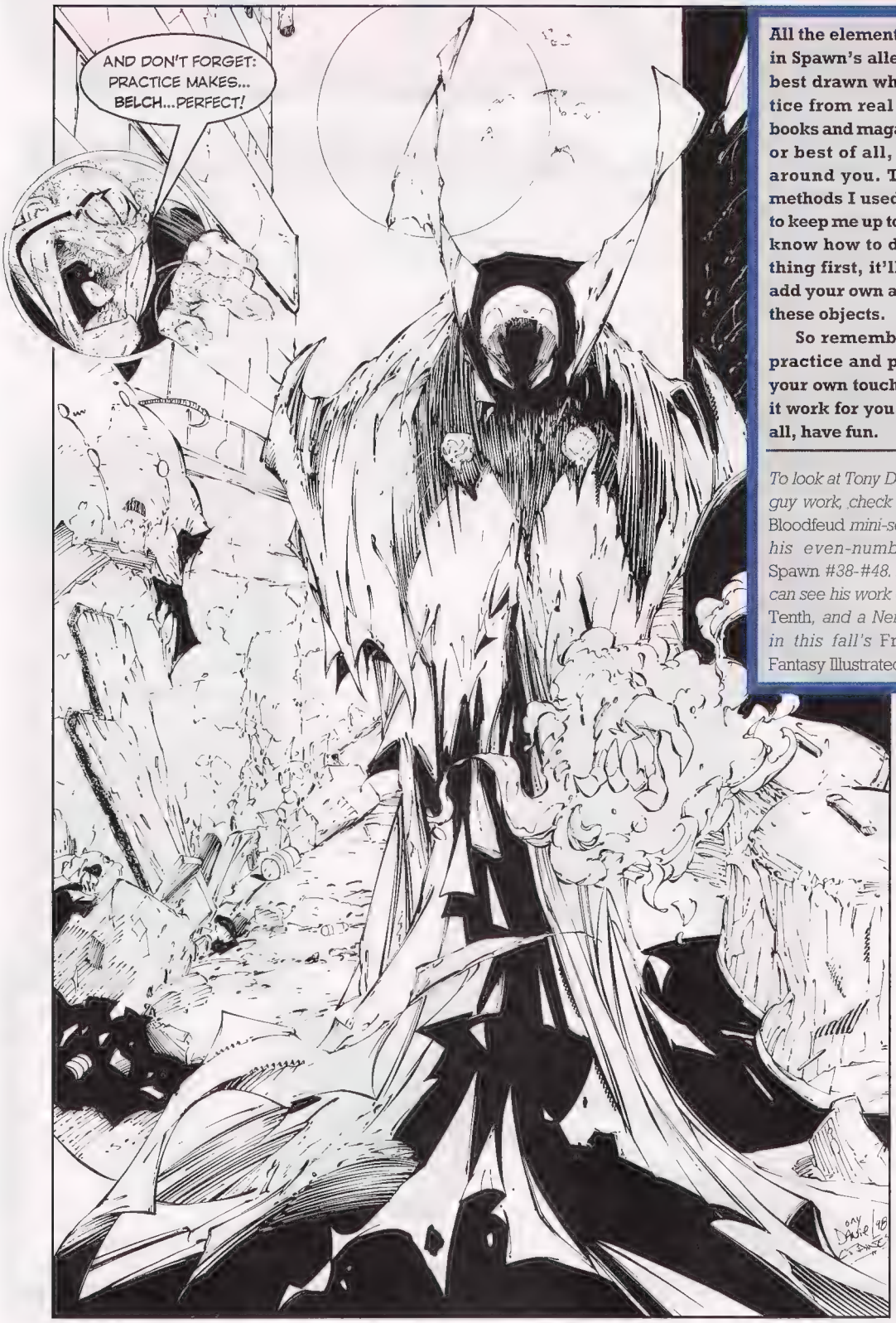


The side view's a little tougher. It's straight across in back, and you see one full triangle in front, plus one partial triangle on the other side of his head. Remember that each side should end (at a point) right around where the base of his neck should be.

Spawning Grounds

Now that you've been shown the basics of the man and his costume, you need a place to put him, right? Well, Spawn just wouldn't be Spawn unless he was drawn in his natural element—the alley!

First off, make sure you've got plenty of shadows cast on the decaying brick walls. This gives it that eerie feel. Also, don't make everything too neat. The bricks in the wall can have different shapes, cracks, bullet holes or even some graffitti on 'em. Try adding fire escapes, pipes, boarded-up windows, etc. Garbage cans and dumpsters are a must, as are those pesky li'l rats. Boards, mattresses, bottles and cans on the ground are great additions too. Add anything you want, like an abandoned car, spare wheels, a sleeping bum, a busted TV, whatever.



All the elements I've thrown in Spawn's alley are objects best drawn when you practice from real life. Look in books and magazines, on TV, or best of all, at the world around you. These are all methods I used and *still* use to keep me up to speed. If you know how to draw the real thing first, it'll be easier to add your own artistic flair to these objects.

So remember: Practice, practice and practice. Add your own touches and make it work for you. And most of all, have fun.

To look at Tony Daniel's Spawny-guy work, check out the Spawn: Bloodfeud *mini-series, as well as his even-numbered run on* Spawn *#38-#48. Nowadays, you can see his work on Image's* The Tenth, *and a Neil Gaiman story in this fall's* Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated *#3.*

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

This month, the spotlight shines on the talented winners of *Wizard* #77's "Armor Makes the Man" Iron Man contest, in which fans were asked to design a new look, or specialty suit of armor, for Tony Stark ('cause we don't like seeing him nekkid). *Iron Man* artist Sean Chen lent his own talents to draw the Grand Prize winner an exact replica of his newly doctored Iron Man armor. The Grand Prize winnah also gets three stylin' outfits (including jeans, shirts, jackets and hats), all Tony Stark-style, from Enyce. Each of our honorable mentions scores a Sean Chen-signed copy of *Iron Man* (vol.3) #1 and some funky-cool Enyce products. Congrats, all.

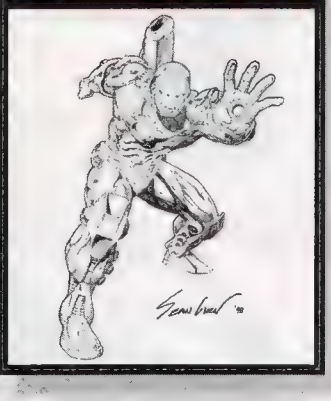
GRAND PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

POWER-PACK IRON MAN

by FRANCIS LEE, Dover, N.J.

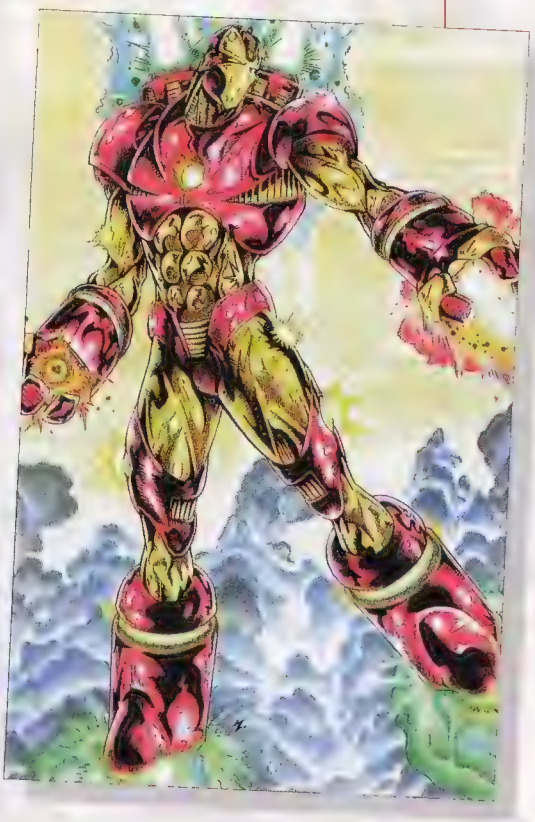
THE BOOTY



IRON MONK
MARK MORENO, Houston, Texas

ARMOR-GEDDON IRON MAN
BURUNDI FLETCHER, Tinton Falls, N.J.

NUCLEAR FIREPOWER SPECIAL
EDUARDO TORRES, Brooklyn, N.Y.



HIGHLY PREPARED IRON MAN
CHRIS WELLER, Fort Collins, Colo.

Drawing Board

HONORABLE MENTIONS

IRON FORCE
MARK MARMINO, Shalimar, Fla.

DEEP-SEA BLASTER
JASON SALIGA, British Columbia, Canada

EXTRA-HEAVY-ARTILLERY IRON MAN
JESSE J. MARTINEZ JR., Bothell, Wash.

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT!

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include two color photos of yourself** (no Polaroids, please). All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

SONGS OF THE WITCHBLADE

A SOUNDTRACK TO THE COMIC BOOK

WITCHBLADE™

AUGUST 98

MUSIC BY BABES IN TOYLAND, PETER STEELE

COMPOSED, CURATED, COBBLED, AND CONTROLLED BY KAT BJELLAND (OF BABES IN TOYLAND)

MUSIC BY BABES IN TOYLAND, PETER STEELE (TYPE O NEGATIVE), BUZZ OSBORNE (THE MELVINS), SUB CIRCUS, THE CREATURES, BOYS VS. GIRLS, CHRIS VRENNA, STEVE DUDA, RAVE OGILVIE, MIMI GOESE, HOPE NICHOLLS, JIM THIRWELL (FOETUS), MIHO HATORI (CIBO MATTO), ARTO LINDSAY (DNA) KIM FOX, LYDIA LUNCH AND A CAST OF THOUSANDS.

Produced and mixed by Dave "Rave" Ogilvie
(Thanks for the loan Puppy and Trent)

Executive Producers
Marc Silvestri and Brad Foxhoven (Top Cow Productions)
and Tim Carr (Dreamworks Records)

TOP COW

DREAMWORKS

www.topcow.com

DEFINE THE WITCHBLADE

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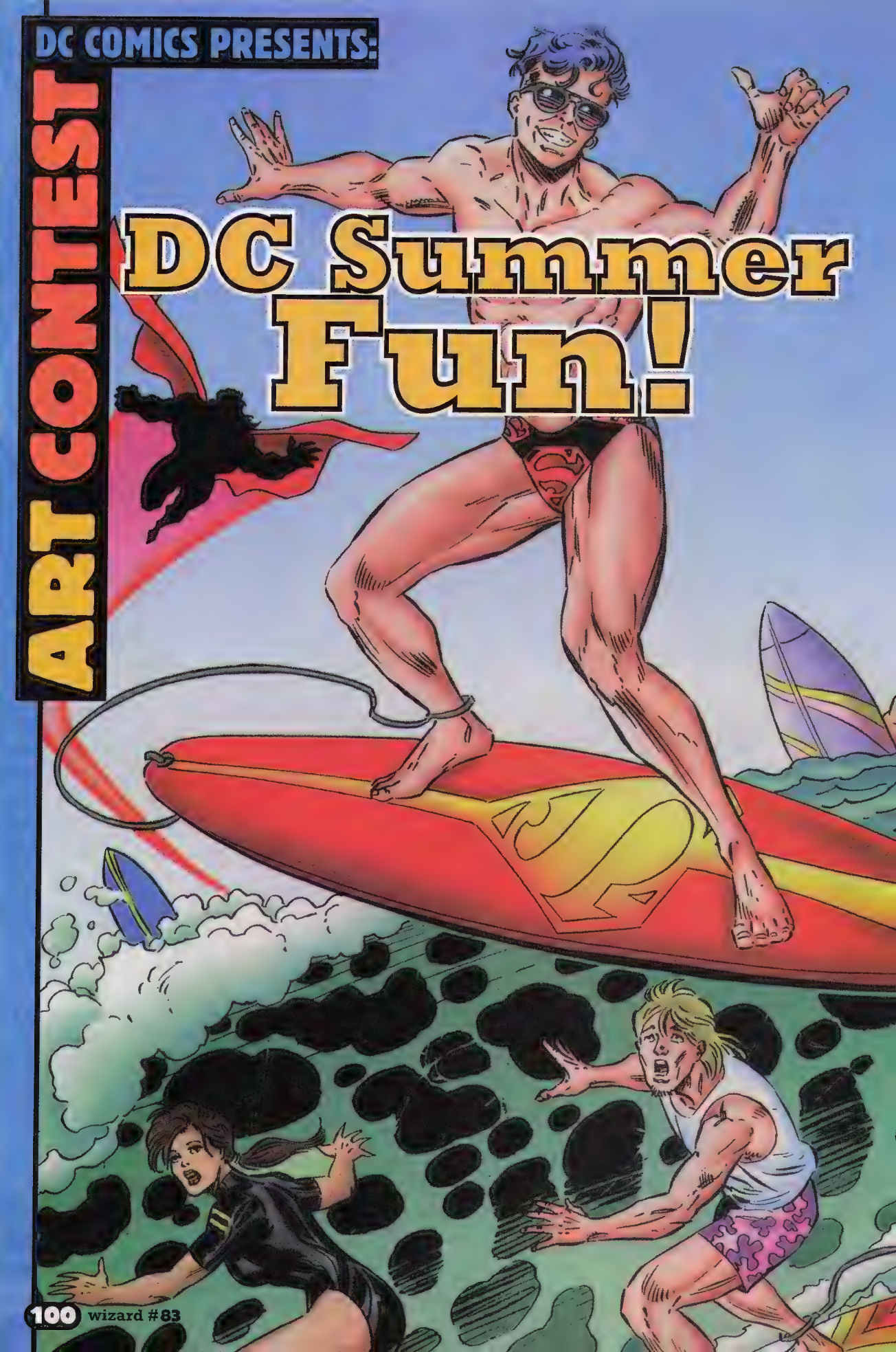
DC COMICS PRESENTS:

ART CONTEST

DC Summer Fun!



HOW TO ENTER... It's simple, really. Just take any summertime activity—hanging at the beach, barbecuing, playing kick-ball—and draw your favorite DC heroes (or villains) busy doing said activity. Like, ohhh...Doomsday working the grill at a supervillain barbecue, the Black Racer building a sand castle, the Huntress and Nightwing sunbathing...you get the picture.

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): The essential DC summer-reading library! One big kahuna wins the 25 must-own DC trade paperbacks: *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, *Batman: The Killing Joke*, *Batman: Knightfall* (part 1 and part 2), *Batman: Year One*, *The Big Book of Urban Legends*, *The Books of Magic*, *Camelot 3000*, *Death: The High Cost of Living*, *The Death of Superman*, *JLA: New World Order*, *Kingdom Come*, *The Man of Steel*, *Preacher: Gone to Texas*, *The Return of Superman*, *Ronin*, *The Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes*, *The Sandman: Dream Country*, *Star Trek: Debt of Honor*, *Stuck Rubber Baby*, *The System*, *V for Vendetta*, *Watchmen* and *World Without a Superman*!

FIRST PRIZE (5): Five boys of summer each win five randomly selected trade paperbacks from DC's essential 25.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten surfer dudes each score one random trade paperback from DC's essential 25.

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat. Make sure to include two photos of yourself with your entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back. Oh yeah, and feel free to make the goofiest face you can!
IMPORTANT! Fill out the entry form below and attach it to the back of ALL of your submissions. **NOTE:** Some prizes are intended for mature readers. Winners under 18 will have substitute prizes provided for any and all mature materials.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY DC COMICS AND MAN! CAN THEY GRILL UP A PIECE OF CHICKEN. YUM! YUM!

BEACH BLANKET LINGO

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, DC Comics, their immediate families and anyone who smokes at the beach. That is really foul. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, telephone number with area code and e-mail address on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "DC Summer Fun!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Some prizes are intended for mature readers. Winners under 18 will have substitute prizes provided for any and all mature materials. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, mutilated entries or entries sent in covered with sand, barbecue sauce or suntan lotion. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than September 4, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected and we'll dunk the entrant in the pool. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 14, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after August 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "DC Summer Fun!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach it to your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:
"DC Summer Fun!" Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"DC Summer Fun!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JULY 31, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ E-mail Address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

1998... THE YEAR OF THE TOY!

By the end of this year, there's a pretty good possibility that *you* will be made into a toy. Want some proof? It seems like just about everybody is signing agreements to have their comic book characters made into action figures.

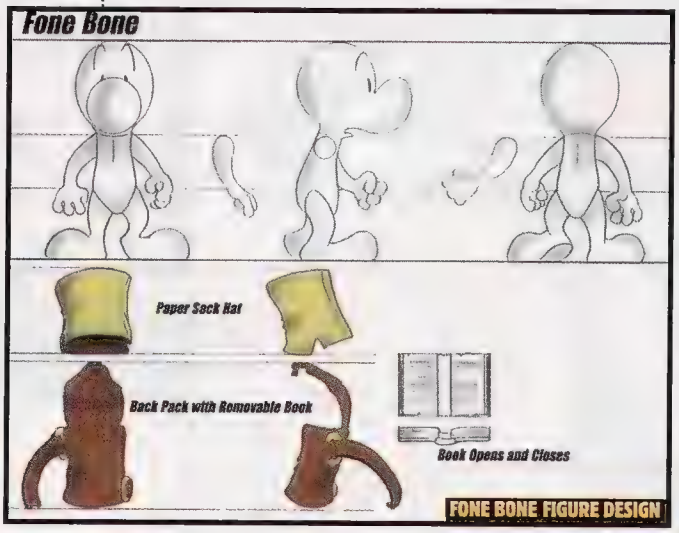
First off, DC Comics silenced many fans' requests by announcing it will offer a brand-new line of toys tailor-made for the comic book market. Kenner still has the rights for Batman, Superman and other heavyweights, but now DC has the opportunity to bring action figure life to some of the other corners of the DC Universe. First up this November are *MAD Magazine* icons **Alfred E. Neuman** and those pointy-nosed black-and-white **Spy vs. Spy** goons. After that, Neil Gaiman's Endless characters from *Sandman* (including **Sandman**, **Death** and **Destiny**) hit stores as pewter and PVC sets. The otherworldly family may also be the subject of the second helping of DC's toy assortments, which will ship in bunches of three or four every quarter beginning in 1999.

In other DC news, Kenner and Kay-Bee Toys will release **JLA** action figures—redecoed Batman: Total Justice figures—in late summer or early fall. In addition, they'll create a 12-inch Kyle Rayner Green Lantern figure. Meanwhile, Diamond Comics Distributors will be offering up two boxed sets of the JLA figures as well. Set One has **Electric Superman**, **Green Lantern**, the **Huntress** and hard-light hologram versions of **Batman** and **Flash** (from the recent "Rock of Ages" storyline), while Set Two has **Batman**, **Flash**, **Green Arrow** and hard-light versions of **Green Lantern** and **Electric Superman**.

If you need more proof that toys rule the year, look no further than the massive amount of comic creators who have signed toy deals recently. Kurt Busiek stunned fans by announcing **Astro City** action figures are on the way (even though he has repeatedly said he thought toys would be a bad idea), courtesy of Toy Vault. Let's all be thankful Busiek changed his mind as we wait for Astro City toys to hit stores by the end of the year.

Jeff Smith has thrown his **Bone** characters into the ring as well, signing with ReSaurus, makers of Duke Nukem toys, for a massive line of action figures that will encompass the entire Bone world, from Phoney Bone to the Red Dragon and all the little woodland creatures inbetween.

And if all that wasn't enough, fans can look for Moore Action Collectibles to make action figures from **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**, **The Darkness** and **Darkchylde** while McFarlane Toys will produce toys based on obscure, but finally remembered, **Eclipse Comics** characters like the Heap, Airboy and the Black Terror.



ALL PHOTOS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Smoking Vegetables, Smoking Delinquents and...Killer Poodles?

SNOOTCHIE BOOTCHIES!

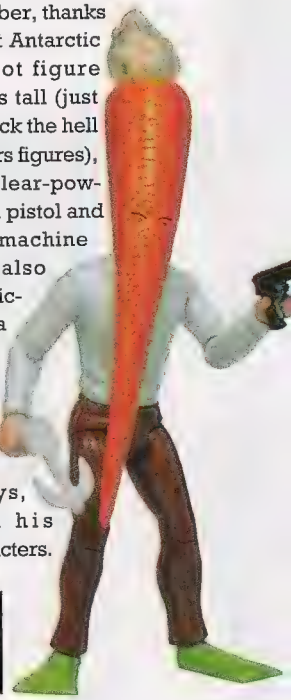
If there was an award for the most tasteless toys, Graphitti Designs' new **Jay and Silent Bob** action figures, based on the cult faves from the films of Kevin Smith, would win hands-down. And that's the best part about these toys which come out in September! Based on designs by *Mage* creator Matt Wagner, Jay and Bob come with a host of politically incorrect accessories, including a half- downed six-pack, miniature drug paraphernalia, interchangeable hands in a variety of descriptive poses and Krypto, a li'l doggie who can only stand on his front two feet 'cause his...um...you'll just have to see that one for yourself. To top all that off, Jay and Bob will be equipped with special sound chips. Press a button on Jay's back and he'll spout out catch phrases like "Snootchie Bootchies!" and "Naga-noonch!" Press a button on Silent Bob's back and he'll say...absolutely nothing. So *that's* why they call him Silent Bob.

FLY, FAT ASS! Jay (right) and Silent Bob (left) finally leave the mall, only to end up at a toy store.

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

Flaming *what*?

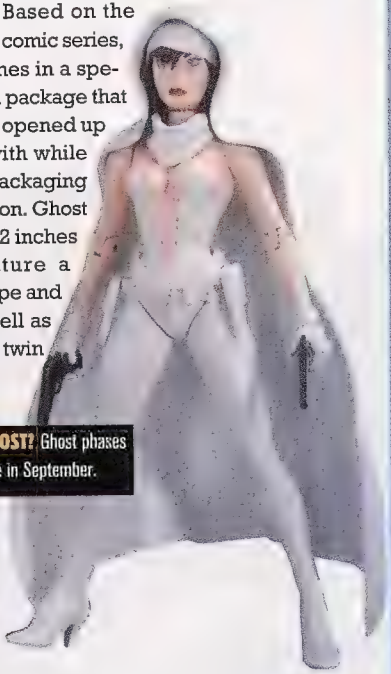
Cult-comic star **Flaming Carrot**, based on Bob Burden's long-running alternative comic, gets his turn as an action figure this September, thanks to the fine folks at Antarctic Press. The Carrot figure stands four inches tall (just big enough to whack the hell outta your Star Wars figures), comes with a nuclear-powered pogo stick, a pistol and a Thompson submachine gun. The figure also features tons of articulation and has a special light-up headpiece. If the Carrot does well, fans could see more Burden creations as toys, starting with his Mysterymen characters.



BURNING PRODUCE Flaming Carrot slices into the toy market in September.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Dark Horse Comics is jumping into the action figure game this September with **Ghost**, its first release. Based on the fan-fave *Ghost* comic series, the figure comes in a special clam-shell package that allows it to be opened up and played with while keeping the packaging in mint condition. Ghost will stand 6 1/2 inches tall and feature a removable cape and gunbelt, as well as her signature twin Colt .45s.

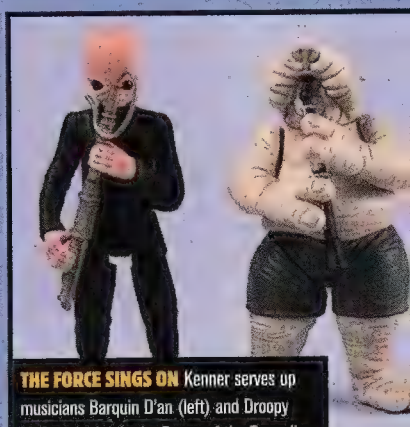


A FRIENDLY GHOST! Ghost phases off the comic page in September.

STAR WARS STUFF

What would a dose of action figure news be without some new Star Wars toys?

Kenner's already shipping its Millennium Minted Coin Collection (exclusive to Toys R Us), featuring redecoed Star Wars characters packaged with collectors coins, and more are on the way. **Luke Skywalker in Endor Gear** and **Princess Leia in Endor Gear** feature the two Star Wars mainstays in reposed versions of figures that were previously offered with Speeder Bike toys. While the originals featured knee joints, these Millennium versions have resculpted, posed legs. Also on the way in May is the first of a series of **Rebo Band** two-packs offered at select Wal-Mart stores with band members from Jabba the Hutt's Palace in "Return of the Jedi." First up is tubby guy **Droopy McCool** and Bith musician **Barquin D'an.**



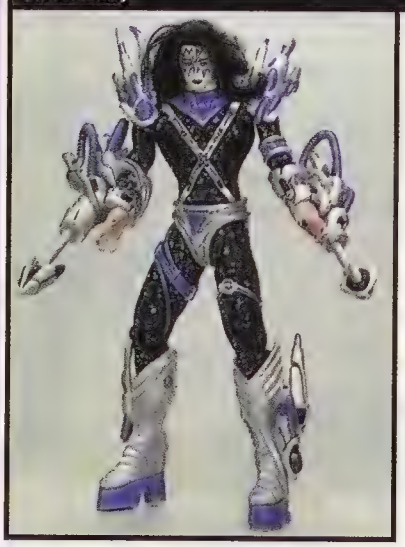
THE FORCE SINGS ON Kenner serves up musicians Barquin D'an (left) and Droopy McCool (right) in the Power of the Force line.

STAR WARS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNER. JAY AND SILENT BOB FIGURES COURTESY OF GRAPHITTI DESIGNS. GHOST COURTESY OF DARK HORSE COMICS.

KISS THIS!

Following up on the astounding success of last year's KISS action figures, McFarlane Toys is having another go at the world famous costumed band with KISS: Psycho Circus. This brand new assortment of toys puts each band member in his respective costume from Image's *Kiss: Psycho Circus* comic series and pairs him up with his funnybook alter ego. That gives you match ups like **Gene Simmons with the Ring Master**, **Peter Criss with Animal Wrangler**, **Paul Stanley with the Jester** (and an **attack poodle**) and **Ace Frehley with Stiltman**. Look for these bad boys in June.

PSYCHO CIRCUS The new KISS line from McFarlane Toys features (clockwise from right) Gene Simmons with the Ring Master, Peter Criss, Paul Stanley with the Jester, and Ace Frehley.

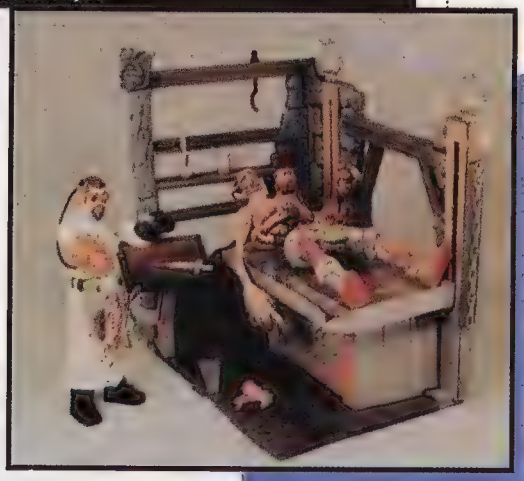


MONSTER MASH

McFarlane Toys makes really neat monsters. Check out the way-cool follow-up to last year's Todd McFarlane's Monsters playsets! Just like the first series, these playsets feature two action figures, a plethora of accessories and a diorama with special action features. The creatures getting the toy treatment this time include the **Sea Creature Playset**, **Mummy Playset**, **Dr. Frankenstein Playset** and the **Phantom of the Opera Playset**. You can find these playsets in stores this May.

Toyfare Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. has become the Wizard office's resident expert on two things: toys and drugs. He really knows his Flintstones chewable vitamins.

MON-STARS Todd McFarlane once again brings us a spooky bunch of monster toys. From left : Frankenstein Playset, Mummy Playset, Phantom of the Opera Playset, and Sea Creature Playset.



WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

1) **SOUTH PARK** Kick ass! Selling "South Park" toys would be easier than Eric Cartman's mom! Give 'em voice chips and kids'll go nuts!

2) **THUNDERBOLTS (Toy Biz)** C'mon Toy Biz, *Thunderbolts* is one of Marvel's best comics, so where are the toys? Serve up each 'Bolt in a two-pack with his villainous identity and comic fans will go loopy!

3) **SPIRIT OF YODA (Star Wars–Kenner)** A perfect counterpoint to Kenner's Spirit of Obi-Wan mail-away, this version of the venerable Jedi Master would be molded in clear blue for an eerie look.

4) **NIGHTWING (DC Heroes–Kenner)** Sure, Kenner's added Nightwing to the Batman Animated lineup, but we still want a comic book version of him for our DC collection. Make sure he's multi-jointed and comes with a jumpline so he can swing around Blüdhaven.

5) **AMALGAM (Toy Biz/Kenner)** It might be an impossible dream, but an action figure line based on cross-universe characters like Dark Claw, Spider-Boy and Dr. Strangefate would make every fanboy's dreams come true.

6) **CANTINA ALIENS GIFT SET (Star Wars–Kenner)** By far, Star Wars had the coolest creatures, so it's about time Kenner made a set of the Cantina's creepiest denizens. Who knows what the hell half these guys are, but they'd make for some damn fine toys.

7) **COMMISSIONER GORDON (New Adventures of Batman & Robin–Kenner)** The commish has been a part of Batman's life from the get-go, so it's about time he got the action figure treatment. Sculpt him in the animated style and give him a light-up Bat-signal.

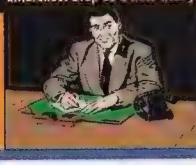
8) **BASTION (X-Men–Toy Biz)** This mysterious X-baddie seems to be the one X-fiend Toy Biz hasn't made yet. Give him up some mutant containment gear so's he can do nasty stuff to the rest of the X-Men toys.

9) **IMPULSE** The Flash ain't the only super-fast guy in the DC Universe! An Impulse action figure needs super-articulated legs to put him in all sorts of cool running poses, and a special wind-up running action.

10) **MARTIAN MANHUNTER (Marvel Heroes)** Jeez! Kenner's making JLA figures but there's no Martian Manhunter? An action figure of this green guy would rock, especially if he had a snap-on Martian vision blast and a cloth cape.

Hey!

Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:



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Or e-mail us at:
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PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERLAST TOYS

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's She-Hulk's Beans So Green, Hitman's *Guns for Fun* book or Earthworm Jim's Mulch Made Easy, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

VERILY! It doth be a bust...of Thor.

TEENY, TINY THUNDER GOD

Bowen Designs presents the Thor Cold-Cast Porcelain Mini-Bust ($50), featuring Marvel's mighty God of Thunder. Sculpted by Randy Bowen, this 6-inch-tall bust shows Thor resting atop a base—which is actually his mighty hammer! The bust, available in June, comes fully painted.

A SCARY (GODMOTHER) PRINT

Super-artist Alex Ross (*Marvels*) has drawn and painted an ultra-cool full-color print of artist Jill Thompson's Scary Godmother ($30), from the Sirius comic. Each print—featuring Godmother smiling amid a host of ghouls—is 16" X 20", signed by Ross, and comes on museum-quality paper. Sirius is selling these masterpieces in July, but be warned—only 500 will be produced.

LOOK OUT, CINDERELLA! This Godmother's scary! But still fun to look at.

THE MAN OF PORCELAIN The classic Superman goes small for this cool mini-statue.

SUPERMINI STATUE

DC Comics presents the Superman Mini-Statue, sculpted by Randy Bowen from designs by Dan Jurgens. Available in stores on July 15, the Superman mini-statue ($39.95) is a miniature porcelain replica of the original Superman statue. However, the mini-statue features a new, form-fitting single-cast cape attached to the body. The statue measures 3.75" X 2.75" X 5.375" and has a limited production run of 5,000.

MONSTROUS MOVIES

Excitement over the new big-screen "Godzilla" movie driving you bonkers for the giant lizard? Courtesy of Simitar Entertainment, you can now enjoy five Godzilla films in your DVD player and VCR. "Godzilla: King of the Monsters" (in the original black-and-white format), "Terror of MechaGodzilla," "Godzilla Versus Mothra," "Godzilla's Revenge" and "Godzilla Versus Monster Zero" are all digitally remastered from the original film prints. The VHS videos are $12.95 (SP) and $9.95 (EP) each, while the DVDs go for $19.98 a pop, and both types of products come with nifty bonuses like interactive trivia games and trailer collections.

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS? ...or maybe just watch them on video.

SHI'S A REAL POSTER CHILD

Crusade Entertainment's Sohei warrior Shi is the sensual subject of a life-size Billboard Poster ($14.95), available now. Shi's creator Billy Tucci, who redrew the 6' X 2' image after not being pleased with his first version, says it's the best Shi portrait he's done in years. Start looking for a (large) place on your room or office wall to hang this colorful poster, which is printed on high-quality gloss paper.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

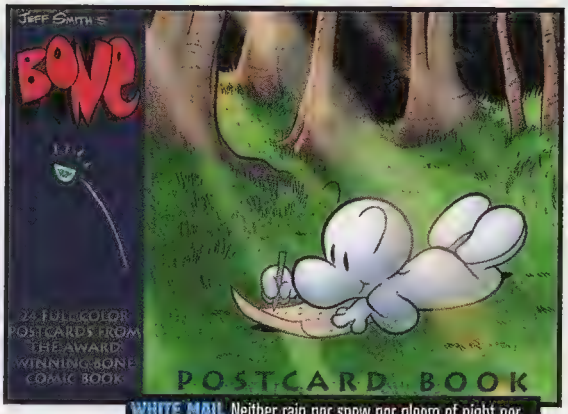
PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

KOLD-KAST KLINGON

Playmates brings you the Star Trek 12-inch Latinum Edition Worf Statue ($96.50), featuring everybody's favorite Klingon as seen in the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" episode "Rightful Heir." Sculpted by Digger from Art Asylum, Lt. Worf is wearing a Klingon tunic and brandishing his deadly sword! Each resin cold-cast statue comes hand-painted and ready to display. Worf will be beaming in this June.

QAPLA'! Worf's ready to kick some fanboy butt.

A LITTLE SHY! Even Shi's too shy to stand up in *this* dress.



WHITE MAIL Neither rain nor snow nor gloom of night nor stupid, stupid Rat Creatures will stay these Bone postcards.

POSTCARDS FROM BONEVILLE

Cartoon Books brings you the Bone Postcard Book Volume One ($12.95), which ships this June. The postcard book comes with 24 full-color cards, each bound into the spine with perforation for easy tear-off action. With art by creator Jeff Smith, each card features a scene from a popular issue of *Bone*. The cards measure 6 7/8" X 4 3/4" and are matte-laminated.

TWO BUSTED WARRIORS

Get medieval with the Xena statue ($75) and the Hercules bust ($100), both from Creative License. Xena, from the hit TV show "Xena: Warrior Princess," is 7 inches and made of cold-cast porcelain. The Hercules Bronze Bust is 13 inches high and features the likeness of TV's favorite half-god Hercules. The Xena statue and Hercules bust will be available in June.

SYNDICATED SCULPTURES Please give generously so that Kevin Sorbo (Hercules) and Lucy Lawless (Xena) can afford villas on the French Riviera.

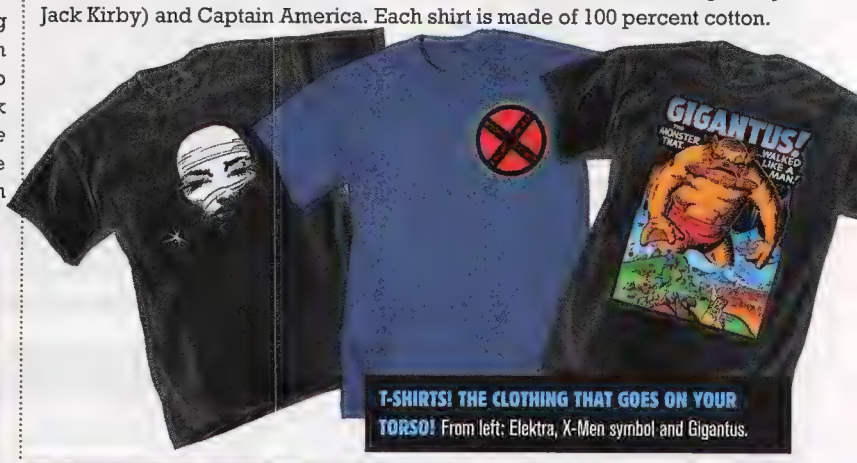
A MUGGY DEATH

DC Comics presents the first in a series of Vertigo mugs with a white-porcelain mug featuring Death of the Endless ($14.95). Each individually boxed mug has four-color art by Chris Bachalo from *Death Gallery* #1 on one side, and logo and line art by Bachalo and Mark Buckingham from the *Death: The Time of Your Life* trade paperback on the reverse. Keep an eye out for this Death mug in July.

MUG O' DEATH We can't guarantee your safety if you drink from a Death mug, but boy, does it look cool.

MARVELOUS SHIRTS

If you wear anything at all, it should be a cool Marvel Comics T-shirt (L-XL, $16.95; XXL, $19.95) from Graphitti Designs. Graphitti is putting out a slew of cool shirts in June: an X-Men symbol shirt, Elektra, Silver Surfer (with art by Jon J Muth), Gigantus (the monster that walked like a man—featuring art by Jack Kirby) and Captain America. Each shirt is made of 100 percent cotton.



T-SHIRTS! THE CLOTHING THAT GOES ON YOUR TORSO! From left: Elektra, X-Men symbol and Gigantus.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out fun comic-related merchandise like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.? We'd like to preview 'em! Please send all info and sample products to:

Stuff
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

HURRICANE COMICS Presents....

Get Racy with Adam Hughes and Chassis

CONTEST

This month our retro 40's redhead Chassis has raced to a new home with Hurricane Comics. To celebrate the all-new Chassis #1, Vol. II, we asked Adam Hughes to use his magical powers and create a fabulous cover for the occasion. Then we thought, HEY! Let's really celebrate and give away the original pen and ink art in a contest! Which, trust us, was a very difficult decision, it would have looked terrific in our office. But our loss in your gain! Jump onto team Chassis and experience the deadly curves of flying rocket car racing!

How to bring Chassis home.....

Easy! Just tell us Chassis' last name! Simple, that's all you have to do, really! The first entry we randomly pick, with the correct answer, Wins!

Grand Prize (1):

One lucky Guy or Gal will win the original pen and ink drawing from the cover of Chassis #1, Vol. II, and an 11x17 laser color poster, digitally colored by AH! himself!

First Prize (10)

10 other rocket racecar fans will win an 11x17 full color laser poster of the AH! cover for Chassis #1, Vol. II!

Second Prize (20)

20 other zoot suiters will receive a signed copy of Chassis #1, Vol. II signed by Chassis Artist and co-creator William O'Neill!

Mail Entries to: "Chassis-AH! Contest"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118
Attn.: Karen Evora

o Purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except mployees of Wizard Entertainment, Hurricane Comics, their ...diate families and Joel Schumacher. Batman with nipples? ork! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and lephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3x5 ch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as any times as you like. Mail each entry seperately to: "Chassis-H! Contest" c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, Y 10920-0118. Attn.: Karen Evora. No mechanical reproductions completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry rm before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. t entries become property of Hurricane Comics and none will be turned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the sponsibility of the prizewinners. Prizes are awarded in the names the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where ohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent ith the purposes and rules hereof. All entries must be received ly 31st, 1998. Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, te, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected by ndom drawing from among all properly completed entries by izard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the umber of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the ontest. Winners will be notified no later than September 11th, 1998. entrant having been declared as a winner, does not accept the ize, or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry ll be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes npossible for the sponsor to award the prize, which has been esignated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or roduct of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a rize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the ponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 15th, 998.

or a list of winners, available after August 15th, 1998, and a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Chassis-AH! Contest" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

CHASSIS-AH! Entry Form -

Deadline is July 31, 1998!

NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER (WITH AREA CODE) _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL) _____

WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER...CHASSIS _____

video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and super-secret codes for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

'SOUTH PARK' SERENADE

The "South Park" gang—Kenny, Kyle, Stan, Cartman and the Chef—will be making their way onto PC and (possibly) next-generation gaming consoles as a video game courtesy of Acclaim Entertainment. According to Joseph Lyons of Comedy Central, the game is in its extremely early stage of development right now. "However, it will feature all of the 'South Park' characters, it will be funny and it will fit the criterion of what Comedy Central represents." "South Park" the video game is scheduled for a late '98 or early '99 release.

X-PECT 'THE X-FILES'

The show and feature film aren't enough for its fans, so *The X-Files* will be hitting Windows '95 and Macintosh computers this summer. The Fox Interactive game—which was shot at more than 30 locations, including morgues, motels and laboratories—will take players deep into an original "X-Files" adventure/mystery. The branching reticulated plotlines will enmesh players in the investigation of an ever-growing, amorphous and paranoid conspiracy. The game will have photograph-quality graphics, and will allow the player to play as Agent Craig Willmore, a junior field agent with the Seattle FBI. Players will also receive assistance from Agents Scully and Mulder.

OUT The truth is out there with the *X-Files* video game.

GAME BOY: ALIVE AND KICKING

Nintendo recently announced that a new color Game Boy unit will debut in North America, Europe and Japan later this year. The hardware will be similar in size and style to the traditional Game Boy, but will contain new technology that displays very sharp color graphics on a new type of color-reflective screen designed for play indoors or outdoors. In addition to the new color games, the portable console will still play all the previously released Game Boy games.

Nintendo also announced that on June 1, Game Boy Camera, a cartridge which will plug into any Game Boy unit, will debut. A Nintendo spokesperson recently revealed that the Camera cartridge, which will cost about $50, will allow players to take actual photographs and superimpose the images onto the faces of video game characters, allowing themselves to become protagonists in the action. The cartridge will also allow the splicing of pictures together, distortions (reshaping the photos as if in a funhouse mirror, for instance) and photo printouts on another printer attachment, which will also cost about $50. The device will look like a Game Boy cartridge, with a round eye-lens on top that swivels 180 degrees. Point the "eye," take a picture and it will appear instantly on the Game Boy screen.

CANDID CAMERA Smile, son. With the Game Boy Camera, you can put your face onto video game characters.

OOPS...

Nintendo's soon-to-be-released disk drive add-on for the Nintendo 64 was incorrectly referred to in *Wizard* #81 as a "CD drive." In fact, the drive will be a "writable magnetic disk drive." *Wizard* regrets the error. ■

UP AHEAD

A bigger, badder Batman...
Phil Hartman goes 'Blasto'...
viva la 'Rebellion' and more!!!

BATMAN & ROBIN

MANUFACTURER: Acclaim
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: $49.95; June

Batman & Robin is one of the most involved superhero adaptations to appear in a home video game format. With dozens of Gotham City streets and buildings to traverse, as well as several bad guys to overcome, clues to piece together and the multi-faceted Batcave as an operations base, this third-person 3-D fighting adventure game demands a heavy time commitment and intense exploration. In fact, the game's Byzantine complexity seems to become a metaphor for the psychological complexity of the legendary Batman character himself.

The disc *Wizard* previewed was of an unfinished draft of the game, and at this stage the fight scenes against Mr. Freeze's henchmen seem unrealized. Batman's martial arts just aren't fully amenable to player control yet, leading to repeated frustrating freezings at the hands of the freeze guys.

Still, the game seems promising. Players can play as Batman, Robin or Batgirl (each with character-specific strengths and weapons) and are able to switch characters during gameplay. After players leave the Batcave, they navigate the city by reading a map on the screen's lower right-hand corner. Batman gets out of his cool Batmobile to explore buildings, and has to ply his fighting skills against giant snowman-looking thugs, as well as solve various puzzles.

TRY IT... If you like *Batman Returns*, *Fighting Force* or The *Journeyman Project*, you'll love *Batman & Robin*.

While it's still too early to pass judgment on the end product, Acclaim's *Batman & Robin* seems like a fairly interesting search-and-fight game, offering excellent graphics and fighting, as well as an extensive challenge to fans of puzzle-solving video games. ■

ICE-COLD BUDS Play as Batman, Robin or Batgirl, and kick some face (top) or confront Mr. Freeze in his lair (bottom). But what's with the bongo drum?

BLASTO

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: $49.95; available now

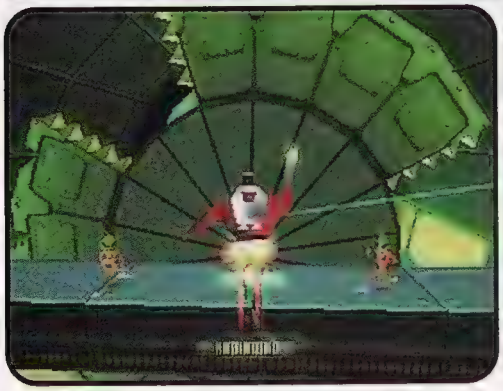
When Uranus needs saving, and Earth's on the line, only one barrel-chested, All-American, red-and-blue superhero is up to the task. Superman? Forget about it. It's Captain Blasto to the rescue.

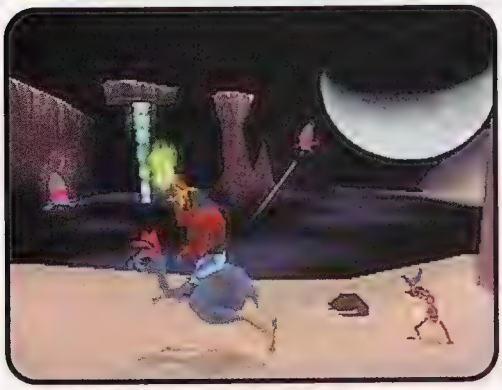
Don Blasto's tights for the third-person, 3-D comic shoot-'em-up *Blasto*. Blasto, a blond super-brute with a tremendous chest and teeny-tiny legs, must put an end to the evil alien dirtbag Bosc's plan to subjugate Mother Earth. Our hero must climb, jump, fly (with the aid of a jetpack), swim and otherwise navigate his way through five sprawling areas—from the Uranian spaceport to Bosc's fortress. Along the way, Blasto must shoot, rescue babes, shoot, pick up powerups and exotic weapons and...um...shoot his way past hundreds of little green aliens and a host of other assorted scum, including (but not limited to): evil Blasto clones, Uranian nomads and Tiny the 12-Foot-Tall Man-Eating Snarf.

While *Blasto*'s formula has been done before (most famously in *Tomb Raider* I and II), the gameplay is—pardon the pun—super-duper and the little touches make this game a must-have.

TRY IT... If you like *Earthworm Jim*, *Clayfighter* or *Pitfall*, you'll blast off to Uranus for *Blasto*.

Blasto is voiced by actor Phil Hartman ("Saturday Night Live"), who provides some hilarious commentary. Rifle off a lucky shot on an alien and Blasto will quip, "Gut shot—bad way to die...oh, well. See ya!", or fall off a platform and he's likely to scream for mommy. Make it to the Uranian dunes, and Blasto can capture and ride a huge, blue, plucked (and presumably finger-lickin' good) chicken named Kay Efcee. And lastly, be prepared to laugh long and hard after our hero presses the shiny red button marked "Do not press." ■ ***Blasto* review by Gregory Orlando**





STUPOR MAN! Whether he's rocketing to justice (top) or riding an eight-piece meal through Uranian dunes (bottom), Captain Blasto is the man.

MORE→

REBELLION

MANUFACTURER: LucasArts
PLATFORM: PC
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: $49.95; available now

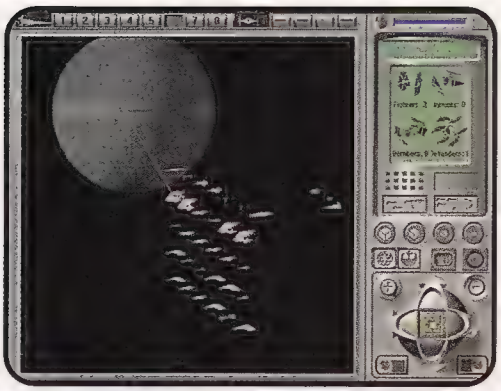
A few minutes ago, the Empire was running smoothly. Out of nowhere, a saboteur blows a Victory-class Star Destroyer to Hell and Darth Vader's captured by Rebel Infiltrators.Think fast, Emperor.

The long-awaited *Rebellion* is here, allowing Star Wars fans to rule the galaxy as the evil Empire, or try their hands at guiding those upstart Rebels. *Rebellion* is a real-time strategy game requiring would-be universe conquerors to step into a 100-planet galaxy with nearly 60 game characters and numerous ships and ground troops (all from the Star Wars universe) in either a single-player campaign, or a two-player duel via direct modem or Internet connection. The wealth of possibilities for each side is immense and easily facilitated by the interface, which can be set to auto-manage certain aspects of garrison or resource maintenance.

The lion's share of gameplay occurs in "strategic mode," where planets are colonized or conquered, resources managed and military forces developed. When two opposing fleets meet, the game switches to tactical mode and players are required to dispense orders to each ship or fighter group in their fleet; results of a battle, however, seem to be determined by one fleet's numerical superiority, rather than by a player's tactical strategy.

TRY IT... If you like *Civilization* (I or II), the idea of world domination or *Master of Orion II*, step on an Ewok to get *Rebellion*.

Despite being the most in-depth and well-researched Star Wars game yet, *Rebellion* lacks a number of characters (like Boba Fett) and possibilities. However, these minor details detract only slightly from the overall experience of taking control of the legendary Star Wars universe. In terms of military development, diplomacy and strategy, *Rebellion* offers a great deal of replay value, and is certain to appeal to any fan of Star Wars or real-time tactical gaming. ■ ***Rebellion* review by Dan DiGiacomo**



USE DA SCHWARTZ! Attack the Death Star (top) and they'll commit you–or give you a medal. Bottom: Help the Empire strike back.

CHEATSHEET webline

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

'RAMPAGE' REVEALED

Has stomping cities lost its flavor? Well, pop in your PlayStation version of *Rampage World Tour* (see *Wizard* #81 for the review) and try these secret codes.

Users will have to enter these codes on the intermission screens, when a player's statistics (number of people eaten, vehicles destroyed, etc.) are displayed and the upcoming city is shown.

Secret Levels (may only be performed on the following cities: Atlanta, Louisville, Phoenix and Fairbanks)

George the ape: Press the jump button three times.
Lizzy the dino: Press the punch button three times.
Ralph the wolf: Press the kick button three times.

Skip Ahead 10 Cities (may only be performed on the following cities: Cleveland, Oklahoma, Fargo and Reno)

George: Press jump, punch and kick.
Lizzy: Press punch, kick and jump.
Ralph: Press kick, jump and punch.

Feed Your Face (may only be performed on the following cities: Moab, Kodiak, Nash, Washington, D.C., London, Kiev, Rio and Casablanca)

George: Press jump.
Lizzy: Press punch.
Ralph: Press kick.

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

http://www.lookup.com/homepages/81849/x-files.htm
Assorted "X-Files" links.

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ajportergotham.htm
Check out the monthly *Gotham Gazette* for awards, reviews and more.

http://www.lucasarts.com/static/rebellion/rebellion.htm
Rebellion gameplay tips, images, links and lots of other cool stuff.

http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Studio/6290/
Learn why Admiral Ackbar (from "Return of the Jedi") should be president. No kidding.

http://www.geocities.com/CollegePar Campus/4656/spam.html
Are you brave enough to enter the Hall of Spam?

http://iquake.cts.com/aaron/mrhankey/index.html
Kill some time waiting for the "South Park" video game to come out and head to the homepage of Mr. Hankey (the Christmas poo). ■

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THE TOY MAGAZINE #13

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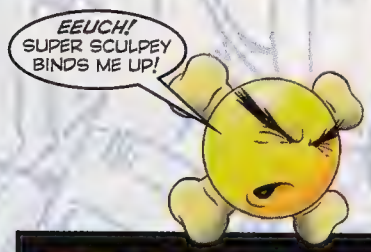
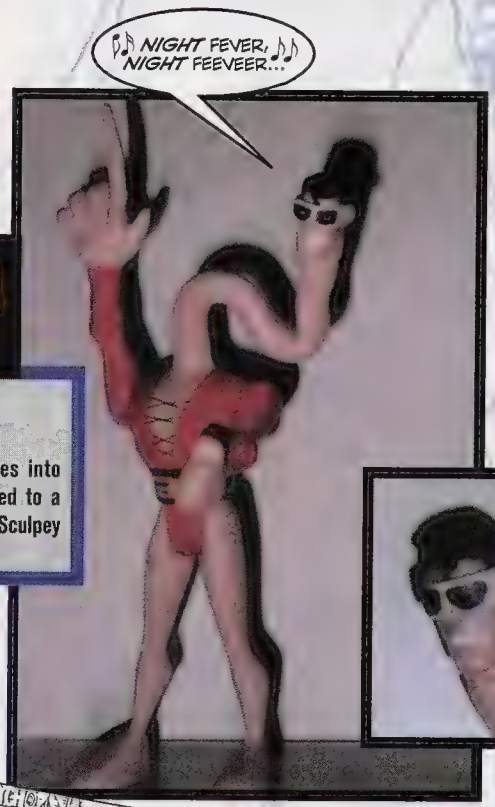
HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

HEY, QUIT YER WHININ', YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!





GRAND PRIZE WINNER

PLASTIC MAN

D. J. Sylvis of Oil City, Pa.

The newest and goofiest member of the JLA stretches into action from a Kenner Animated Superman head attached to a Kenner Crime Solver Nightwing body. Add some Super Sculpey and Plastic Man lives up to his name!

WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The Grand Prize winner walks away with an assortment of *Joe Psycho and Moo Frog* goodies, including original art, a hand-sculpted statue, a hand-painted and custom-drawn hat, a signed and numbered issue, a sterling silver handmade pin and a button set. The four other talented creators just get to brag that their figures were showcased in *Wizard*.

Many thanks to the Goblin Studios folks for the funky prizes!

VENTRILOQUIST AND SCARFACE

Andy F. Toutant of Racine, Wis.

Ventriloquist (left) and Scarface were born from nothing but some "self-hardening" gray clay. Andy then painted this Batman villain and popped on a few broom bristles for hair.

EEL

Brian Perone of Baton Rouge, La.

Check out this keen paint job! The Marvel villain Eel was zapped into existence from a Toy Biz Spider-Man.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

FLAMING CARROT

Tony Devney of Fall Creek, Wis.

Burning a 1975 Hasbro G. I. Joe figure?!?! Yes, Tony connected a real carrot to a G.I. Joe head, threw on some cardboard eyes and lit the top on fire. Mmm. Cooked carrots.

EPHANT MAN (FROM "RETURN OF THE JEDI")

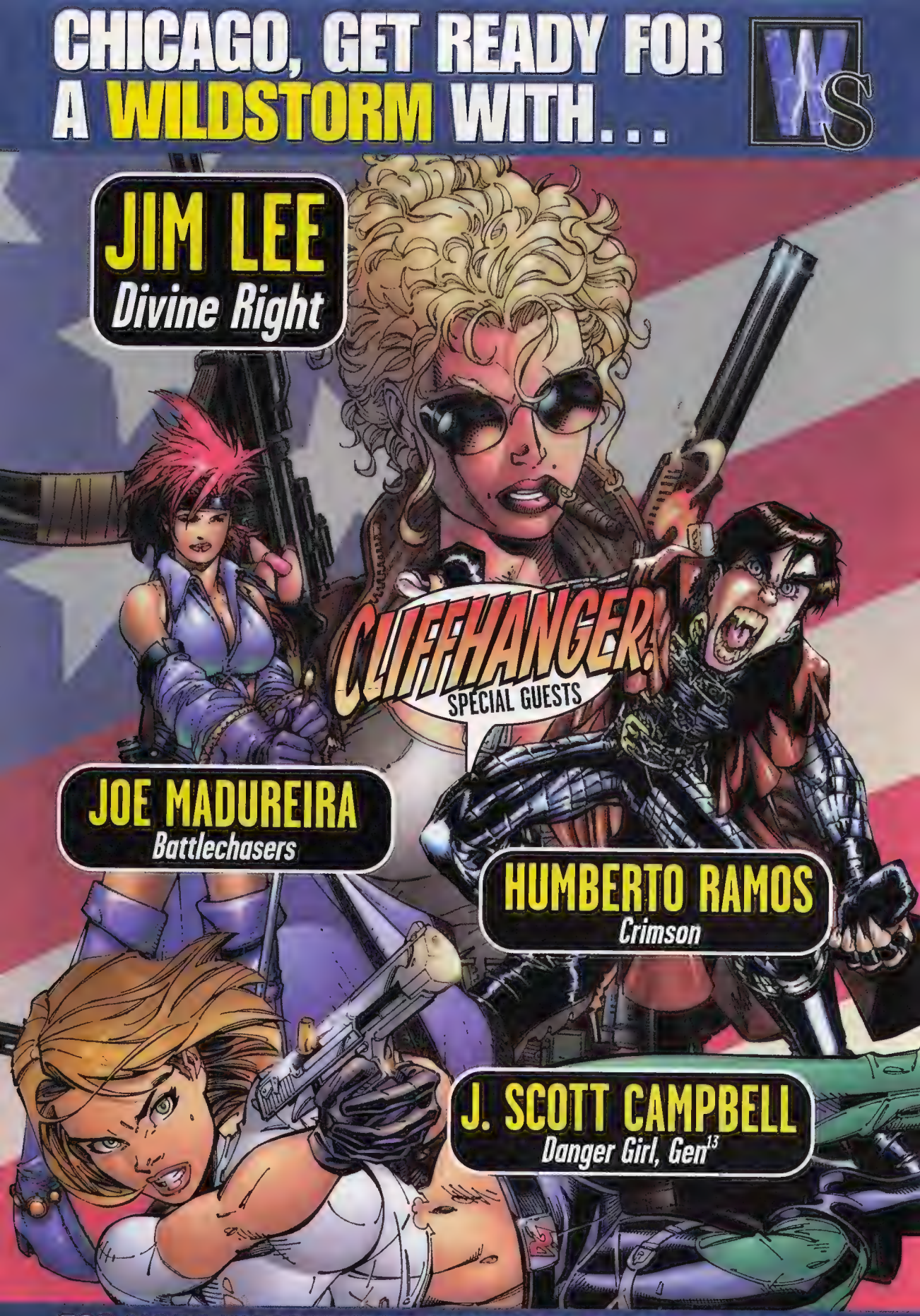
Jarrod Turner of Dyer, Tenn.

Wire. Wood. Super Sculpey. Clay. It's the attention to detail that gives this Ephant Man (seen ever so briefly in Jabba's palace in "Return of the Jedi") the *oomph* to be printed in our magazine.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs **(No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!)**, along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118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Divine Right
CLIFFHANGER!
SPECIAL GUESTS
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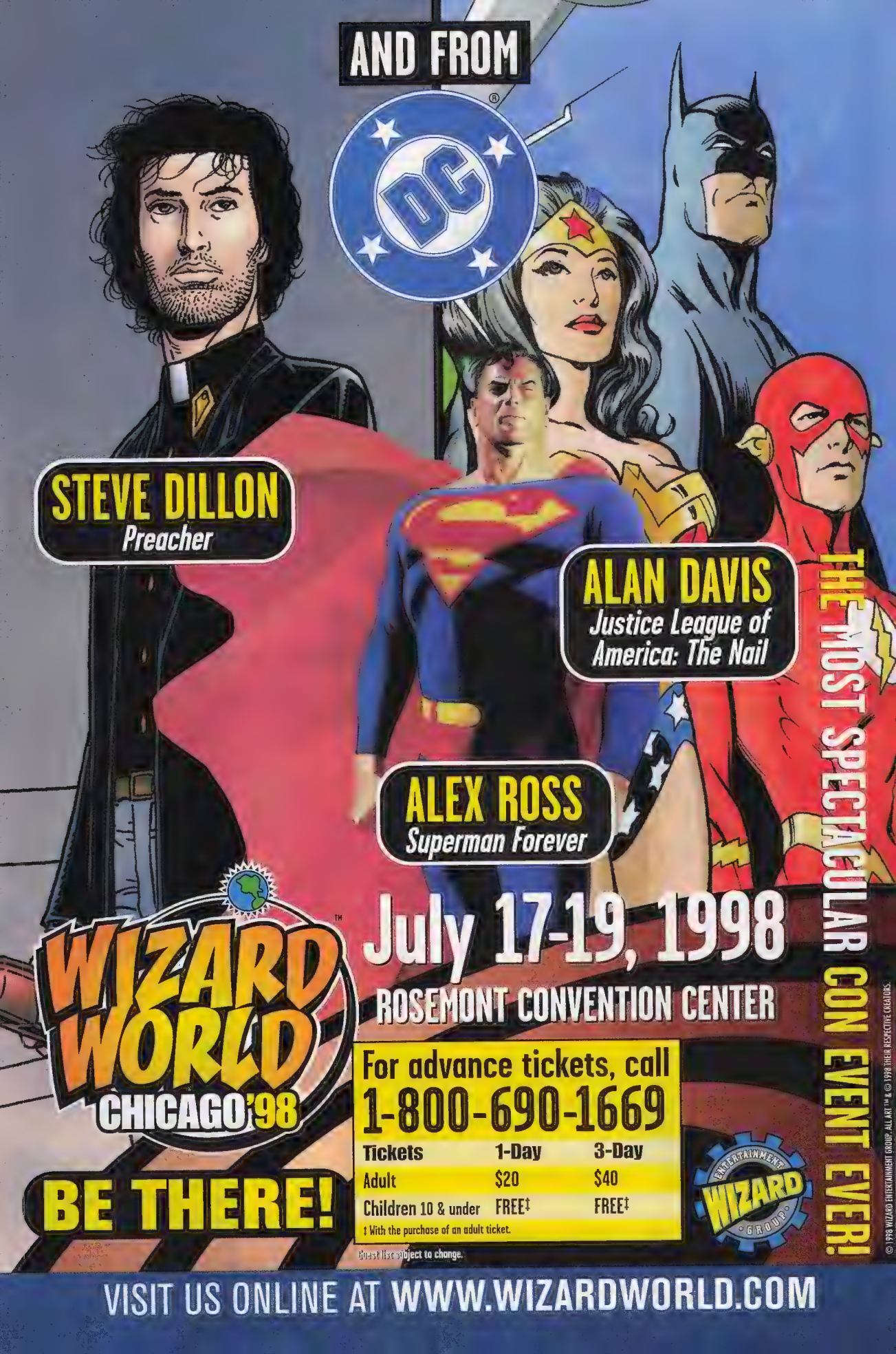
Battlechasers
HUMBERTO RAMOS
Crimson
J. SCOTT CAMPBELL
Danger Girl, Gen13
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO,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CHARACTER PROFILE

CHANCE FALCONER

From the pages of LEAVE IT TO CHANCE

BY MATTHEW BRADY

Chance Falconer is your average 14-year-old girl—if the average 14-year-old girl leads a life more dangerous than that of Indiana Jones. Chance talks to fairies and pals around with a red dragon. Her life is one big adventure, with each new day getting progressively stranger...

ORIGIN

FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, a Falconer has protected the city of Devil's Echo from supernatural threats, the role passing from father to son. Until now. Lucas Falconer, the current protector, had only one child, a daughter named Chance.

Lucas, a veteran of countless supernatural battles, forbade Chance from entering the family business, deeming it too dangerous for Chance. He resigned himself to the fact that the Falconer tradition would skip a generation, and planned to train Chance's son (when she had one) in the ways of supernatural investigation and battle.

Chance had other ideas. On her 14th birthday, she approached her father, who was trying to return a dragon to its home dimension, and asked to become his apprentice. Lucas refused, but Chance was determined to prove him wrong. After freeing the dragon—which she later named St. George—Chance struck out on her own. She was resolved to show her father she could one day fill his role as the guardian of Devil's Echo.

VITAL STATS

Real Name: Chance Falconer
Age: 14
Height: 5' 1"
Weight: 95 lbs.
Hair Color: Black
Eye Color: Brown
First Appearance: *Leave it to Chance* #1
Currently Appearing in: *Leave it to Chance*
Major Enemies: Phantom of the Mall, Cap'n Hitch and The Beehive

RECENTLY...

FOR HER FIRST CASE, Chance set off in search of Mina Raven, a young girl kidnapped by gangsters. During the investigation, Chance fell into a conspiracy involving the attempted genocide of sewer-dwelling goblins, a crooked mayorial campaign and the summoning of a giant toad god.

The man at the center of the plot was Duncan Bell. Bell was the brother of Miles Belloc—the man responsible for the death of Lucas' wife and his subsequent facial disfigurement. During the investigation, Chance found allies in police officer Margo Vela and Will Bendix, a reporter for the *Devil's Echo Oracle*. Together, the three defeated Bell and returned the toad god to its home dimension.

Chance's next case put her on the trail of a stolen pet monkey named Stanley, swiped during the Devil's Echo Halloween Parade. Abducted by the Beehive, a gang known for its fascination with the occult, Stanley was smuggled along the parade route, a path rich in magical power—which "charged" the monkey with occult energy.

Stanley was to be sacrificed to a tentacled beast, allowing the gang to gain incredible occult powers. Chance and St. George interrupted the spell, closing the gateway and angering the Beehive.

Determined to keep his daughter out of trouble, Lucas arranged for Chance to attend a private boarding school. There, Chance discovered a smuggling ring led by the ghost of Cap'n Hitch, a bloodthirsty pirate who had terrorized the region hundreds of years before. Together with St. George and her school friends, Chance stopped Hitch, and recovered the loot

the criminals were attempting to steal.

As a result of Chance's adventure and the subsequent scandal, the school was closed. Chance returned to Devil's Echo to live with her father, and agreed to try to stay out of trouble.

But it was not to be. Chance went Christmas shopping with her friends, and found herself hip-deep in the mystery of the self-styled "Phantom of the Mall," who was intent on razing the mall to the ground.

Recently, when movie monsters started coming out of screens and threatening audiences, Lucas had to reluctantly accept Chance's help.

Lucas still tells Chance to keep out of trouble, something he knows deep down she'll never do. This knowledge, while he'll never admit it, is a source of great pride for him.

LOOKING AHEAD

BACK ON ITS BIMONTHLY SCHEDULE, *Leave it to Chance* wraps up its two-part movie monster storyline with May's #10. The Devil's Echo Ice Devils hockey team takes the spotlight in #11, when Chance investigates the mystery surrounding its star player's murder. "Chance comes in to investigate and find the killer, but the team still has the playoffs to worry about," *Chance* writer James Robinson says. "Despite their loss, the team is still able to compete, thanks to a nice Devil's Echo twist.

"In issue #12, Chance suddenly realizes that she hasn't visited her fairy friends [last seen in #1], and when she goes to the garden, it's shriveled and dead," Robinson continues. "Not passing up a mystery, Chance shrinks herself to find her friends, finding more than she was expecting, including devastating news, and a cliffhanger ending to end all cliffhanger endings."

North Carolina-based freelance writer Matthew Brady leads a life only slightly more dangerous than that of Rosie O'Donnell's dietitian.

HIGHLIGHTS

RECOMMENDED READING

LEAVE IT TO CHANCE #1-#4—Giant toad attack! Mobster ghouls! Sewer goblins ready for the slaughter! A girl and her pesky dragon pal! Her ugly dad! Her dead dad? These issues are reprinted in the *Shaman's Rain* trade paperback.

LEAVE IT TO CHANCE #5—Stanley the monkey is monster food unless Chance can stop a ritual sacrifice. Worse, if the Beehive gang completes its dirty deed, its members will become supremely powerful.

LEAVE IT TO CHANCE #6-#7—Chance is tied to a dead guy floating on the open sea! Cap'n Hitch, her foe, is this bad-ass pirate who supposedly bought the farm hundreds of years ago—is he a ghost, or just a bad "Scooby-Doo" villain?

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1 WITCHBLADE

Well, well. Miss Sara Pezzini, a.k.a. the winsome wearer of the wickedly wild Witchblade, claws her way back to the top of our chart this month. And why not? When you think about it, there's so few really original ideas in mainstream comic titles these days. You gotcher Caped Crusaders, your Men of Steel, your web-slinging Wall-crawlers...but until Witchblade came along, how many superheroes were stone-cold babes slathered with organic, sentient glop capable of kicking your ass from here to Philly? Answer: zero. There need to be more never-before-seen comic concepts like Witchblade here, dammit! 'Cept nakeder.

2 WOLVERINE

Adamantium claws, bone claws, feral, berserker, yellow costume, brown costume, guy wearing a stupid eye patch—seems like no matter how Marvel dishes up its Wolverine, fans'll line up around the block for a big steaming helping. There ain't no big secret why, neither. Wolvie's the man every young comic reader dreams of being. Think about it: He rides dangerous motorcycles, hands bullies their intestines and his mom never *ever* makes him take a bath. If the local YMCA had a Weapon X program, every kid in town would pounding down the door. Believe it.

3 SPAWN

Just how popular is Spawny-Guy? Let's put it in layman's terms. If Spawn went to your high school, he'd be dating every cheerleader simultaneously. Spawn would copy your homework and, when the teacher found out, she'd believe Spawn, not you. Spawn would be the football team's starting quarterback, and throw five touchdowns in the championship game. Spawn's parents would buy him a Mustang for his 16th birthday. Your mom would ask you, "Why can't you be more like Spawn?" Your girlfriend would be wearing his varsity jacket. Spawn's a jerk.

4 BATMAN

During his oft-repeated origin story, Batman called criminals a "cowardly lot." That's not exactly fair. It doesn't matter if you're a sniveling weenie or a Green Beret, if a guy dressed like a giant bat swoops down on you in a dark alley, you're gonna crap in your shoes. Plus, Batman really likes to hit people. He punched Hitman so hard, Hitman barfed. That's pretty hard. Bravery has nothing to do with it. If a psycho in a bat suit who hits people so hard they barf jumps you, you're going to make wee-wee and scream for mommy.

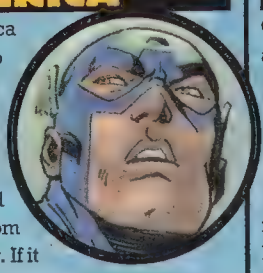
5 THE DARKNESS

Want to know why so many grownups hate comics? Check out hitman Jackie Estacado here. He's armored from the eyeballs down. Want to know what the bulk of his dialogue should be? "Mmph mmph mm mmph!" Which means, "I'm so stinking popular, the laws of common sense don't even apply to me." And hoo-boy, is he ever popular. *The Darkness* #11 sold in excess of one bajillion copies. You'd wear a faceplate too, drooling over all that moolah.

6 DEADPOOL

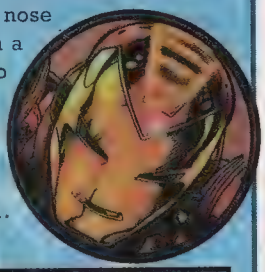
Deadpool's popular. "The Dead Pool," starring Clint Eastwood, wasn't all that popular. Let us delve deeper. Deadpool's one of the wisecracking stars of the Marvel Universe, who mixes hilarity and action with a grand sense of the absurd. "The Dead Pool" had Jim Carrey choke on his vomit and die, had a five-second cameo by Guns n' Roses and Eastwood got chased by an exploding remote-controlled dune buggy. Let us delve deeper no longer, Deadpool fans. This kinda makes us ill.

7 CAPTAIN AMERICA



Not too long ago, Captain America was about as popular as a mosquito up your nose. Then he drifted into a parallel universe for a year, came back and BLAMMO! Cap's so darn hot, he's got not ONE regular monthly title, but TWO! And why not? He *did* save your asses from the Axis powers in W.W.II, ya know. If it weren't for Cap, you'd be goose-stepping down to the local comic processing facility *mach schnell* to pick up your monthly copy of *Divine Reich*. Ingrates.

8 IRON MAN



Climate control or no climate control, that Iron Man armor's gotta get pretty ripe in the summer. It's not the heat, it's the humidity. But who the hell cares? He's Iron Man! No one's gonna hold his nose around a guy who can punch a hole through anyone's torso with a repulsor ray. Of course, regardless of the inevitable B.O., life is rosy for the Golden Avenger. Fans are snapping up his book by the bucketful. Ahh...the sweet smell of success.

9 PREACHER

Jay Leno says that using those naughty curse words is just a crutch for when you can't think of anything original. Know what Jessie Custer here would say to that? Probably something unprintable, then he'd shoot Leno through his eye socket. That's pretty original. We'd say that would make Preacher the Andrew Dice Clay of comics, except Preacher is actually funny. Maybe we can get him to shoot Clay through the eye socket. Now that'd be comedy.

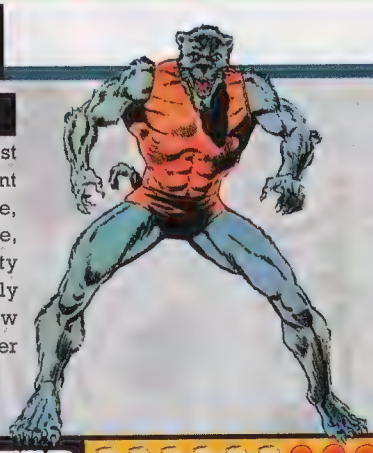
10 SUPERMAN

Ahem. Excuse us, Superman, we're afraid you're going to have to leave. This chart is only for *popular* heroes, and you're Superman Red and Superman Blue or some ridiculous nonsense the fans hate you for. Nice threads, though...hey, wait a second! You're back in your old costume! With a smash hit comic called *Superman Forever* with a lenticular cover! Right this way, sir! Glad you're back! Stay away from those publicity stunts, and maybe you can hang out awhile.

MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

THE WEASEL



Oh, brother. A giant weasel. Well, we suppose you've gotta do the best with what the good Lord gave you. Hey, waitaminnit. That's not a giant mutated weasel! That's just a costume! Some idiot named John Monroe, a professor at Vandemeer University, got all bitchy about his tenure, donned a furry weasel costume and started bumping off faculty members. Then Firestorm came along and beat him like an ugly stepchild a couple times. Just goes to show, kids, that no matter how bad you want that dental plan, dressing up like a dopey rodent is never the answer.

MORTOMETER

PICKS

BEHOLD!

THEY'RE MAD, I TELL YOU!

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN JUNE

book of the month

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA: THE NAIL #1 (OF 3)

DC COMICS Don't think hardware items can alter the DC Universe? Think again. When Ma and Pa Kent get a flat tire from running over a nail, they don't arrive on the scene to find baby Superman in his just-crashed rocket. And the world is drastically changed in this "Elseworlds" mini-series. How much? Well, without Supes as a frontman, the JLA is more feared than loved, and a bald madman named Lex Luthor is mayor of Metropolis. By Alan Davis and Mark Farmer. $4.95

300 #2 (OF 5)

DARK HORSE The Persian army's marching across Greece, and a mere 300 Spartan soldiers are the land's last defense. Will Greek freedom and democracy win out? Or will the Persians crush the opposition at the "hot gates" (That's a narrow mountain pass, not a porn star, you sick puppies!) of Thermopylae? This true-to-the-history-books tale of blood and courage is brought to you by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley. **MR $2.95**

1998 TRILOGY II TOUR BOOK

CARTOON BOOKS It's the official souvenir of the 1998 "Trilogy" convention tour! It's 48 pages of all-new stories, including the first-ever full-color Akiko tale and a *Bone* prequel! It's high in fiber, low in fat and fun for the whole family! It's by the all-star cast of Jeff Smith, Charles Vess, Linda Medley, Mark Crilley, Stan Sakai and Jill Thompson. It's **$4.95**!

AKIKO TRADE PAPERBACK VOL. #2

SIRIUS Akiko, the spunkiest 10-year-old Earth girlie you're ever gonna meet, ventures with her weird (and hilarious) group of pals across the wilderness of planet Smoo to rescue the Smoovian (Or would that be Smooite? Smooian?) prince from the clutches of Alia Rellapor in this collection of *Akiko* #8-#13. Think "Wizard of Oz" meets "Star Wars" and you've got a taste of what this great series is all about. By Mark Crilley. **$11.95**

AQUAMAN #47

DC COMICS Aquaman meets...Aquaman? Sure looks that way, as the present pissed-off, hook-handed king o' the sea takes on a younger, fresh-faced two-handed version of himself who looks like he just stepped outta a "Super Friends" cartoon. And get this—the two of 'em are battlin' over the throne of Atlantis. By Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, Jim Calafiore and Peter Palmiotti. Abnett says, "The younger Aquaman just can't believe that this bad-attitude impostor could *possibly* be King of Atlantis. The younger Aquaman is convinced he's the *right* Aquaman and he's taking over." **$1.95**

ASTRO CITY #16

HOMAGE/IMAGE Ex-con-turned-legit-supersleuth Steeljack—the man made of stainless steel—finds his path

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

to solving the current mystery blocked by...The Man! Literally! *El Hombre*, a disgraced former Honor Guard member, teaches 'Jack a thing or two about falling from grace. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

THE AVENGERS #7

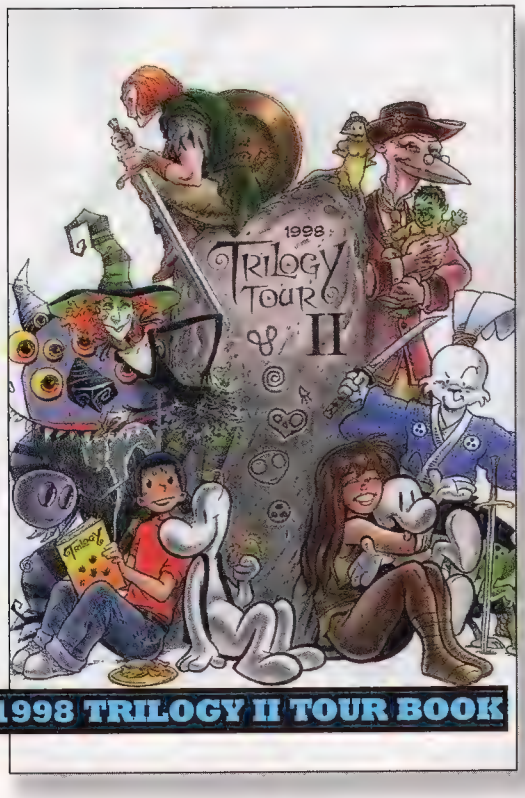
MARVEL "Live Kree or Die!", Part 4 (of 4). We'll live Kree, thank you very much. But the Avengers? They'd rather die than live under the tyrannical jackbooted heel of the slimy alien oppressor Kree! Fight the power! Uh...sorry. Got carried away there a bit. Anyway, this baby's the mega-conclusion to the *Avengers-Iron Man-Cap-Quicksilver* crossover running this month, and rumor has it the Avengers lineup changes with this issue. By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al (Oy!) Vey. **$1.99**

BATTLE CHASERS #3

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE The Battle Chasers are hot on the heels of the assassin (or assassins) knockin' off some of their world's top political dogs when Gully (the cute li'l girl 'Chaser) is kidnapped! And kidnapped by...soon-to-be Battle Chaser Garrison. By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. "Yeah, like in all classic superhero comics, they fight first, and then they team up," says Madureira. "But it's cool to see them fight! And you've got to settle the 'who's tougher than who' question right off the bat." But why pull a page from superhero books into the mystical *Battle Chasers*? "*Battle Chasers* may not look like a superhero book," Madureira says. "But it is. Trust me: It ain't *The Hobbit*." **$2.50**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #8

MARVEL "Live Kree or Die!", Part 2 (of 4). We'll *still* live Kree, thank you very much! Anyhoo, the Supreme Intelligence—that floating head that represents the collective consciousness of generations of Kree—ain't dead! Nope, it's still alive, and living...in the sewers below Manhattan? Hey, you'd be ticked off too if you lived there. And you'd be lookin' to kick some Captain America ass. By Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang. **$1.99**



1998 TRILOGY II TOUR BOOK

DANGER GIRL #3

DANGER GIRL #3

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Danger Girl Abbey Chase does her best Heidi impression as she bundles up and heads to a mysterious mansion in the Swiss Alps. Along the way, she encounters cuckoo clocks, instant cocoa, plenty o' cheese and a danger guy named Johnny Barracuda. By J. Scott Campbell, Andy Hartnell and Alex Garner. **$2.50**

FANTASTIC FOUR #8

MARVEL Barbie was right. Math class *is* hard. The Fantastic Four (that's "4") have to take on infinity (that's "∞") and somehow come out on top or li'l Franklin Richards bites it! Who says? Roma, the guardian of all creation, that's who! And she's got an infinite number of alternate-universe Captain Britains to throw at the FF. By Chris Claremont and Salvador Larroca. Claremont says, "Think of this story as 'The (British) Empire Strikes Back.' I like that as a title. Johnny Storm, the Human Torch, will actually be called on to save the day. And we're talking cosmic. Eternity will make an appearance, as will a certain planet-eater named Galactus." Bring your calculator and join the fun. **$1.99**

THE FLASH #140

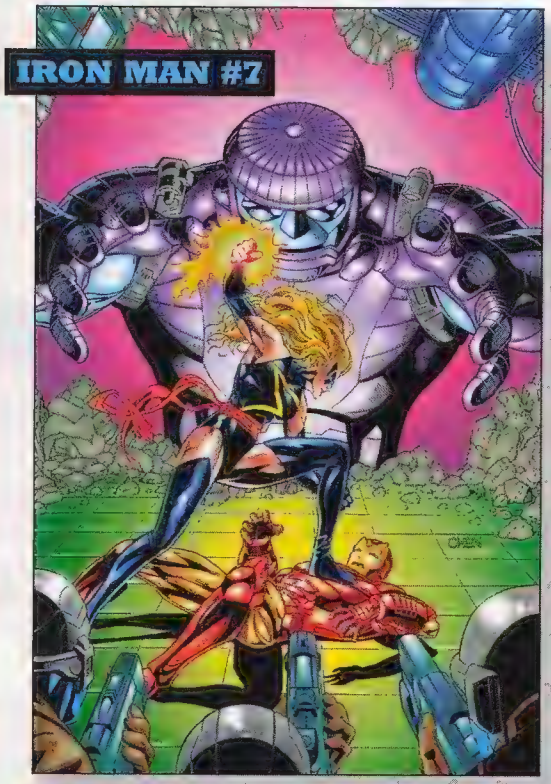
DC COMICS Wally West, the Flash, is in a deep funk 'cause his girlfriend, Linda Park, just slabbed out last issue. If that weren't bad enuff, the Black Flash, who we believe was the star of a small run of early 1970s action films starring Richard Roundtree, is looking to make Wally do the dirtnap, too. By Mark Millar, Pop Mhan and Chris Ivy. **$1.95**

GREEN LANTERN #101-#102

DC COMICS It's two! Two! Two Lanterns in one! Not only does ya get double the usual *Green Lanterns* this month (two issues), but ya gets double the Green Lanterns (Hal Jordan *and* Kyle Rayner)! Time travel has run amok and the dead Hal of the past is alive in our present. We smell trouble. By Ron Marz, Jeff Johnson and Bob Wiacek (#101) and Marz, Paul Pelletier and Terry Austin (#102). **$1.95 each**

HITMAN #29

DC COMICS Hitman Tommy Monaghan and his buddies get the hell out of Dodge (or at least Gotham), 'cause the heat from the goombas is too hot to handle after the demise of mob boss Men's Room Louie. Where do they land? Why, in the African republic of Tynanda, of course, where they take a job from the country's president. By Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach. **$2.25**



IRON MAN #7

MARVEL "Live Kree or Die!", Part 1 (of 4). It all starts here: A bunch o' Kree commandos stuck on Earth blame ol' Shellhead and the Avengers for the death of their Chia Pet-headed leader, The Supreme Intelligence. So what's the best revenge? Starting a new Kree Empire...with Earth smack-dab in the middle of it. By Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen and Sean Parsons. **$1.99**

IRON MAN: THE IRON AGE #1 (OF 2)

MARVEL Let's do the time warp again! Journey with us now to an "untold tale" of young Tony Stark in a day where he just started his Iron Man career and was still years away from drinking himself into a blind mess. This blast from the past reveals how Tony's parents *really* died...and it looks like it weren't no accident. By Kurt Busiek, Patrick Zircher and Bob McLeod. **$5.99**

JLA #21

DC COMICS The Leaguers find themselves prisoners marooned on a tropical island with Gilligan, the Skipper too, the millionaire and his...oops, wrong story. In this ish, the JLA's actually stuck on the faraway planet Rann. But who's the man keepin' them in the pokey? Why, it's Adam Strange, famed space-adventurin' DC hero of the 1950s. But ain't he supposed to be a good guy? That's what the JLA's wonderin' too. By Mark Waid, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.95**

JLA: YEAR ONE #8 (OF 12)

DC COMICS In geometry, a "locus" is a system of points or lines that defines a given condition. In *JLA: Year One*, The Locus is a double-secret group of badasses lookin' to end the world. And only Leaguer J'onn J'onzz can stop 'em. But he's got a big secret all his own that could spell doom for the entire JLA! By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Barry Kitson and Mark Blair. **$1.95**

KANE #22

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS In this gritty cop thriller, the Blind Man continues his vendetta against the New Eden underworld as Detective Kane stalks him. Meanwhile, Officers Page and Malone seek the man with "click-click" shoes. Sounds like Sammy Davis Jr. is back. By one-man band Paul Grist. **$3.50**

MAJOR BUMMER #13

DC COMICS You know Lauren. She's the nice old lady and friend of main character Lou Martin who has the power to see the future. But she's so stuck in the past, she sometimes has a hard time seeing the future. All that gets solved as Lauren travels to the past. Or maybe, the past travels up to meet her (and everyone) in the present. Confused? Yeah, time travel'll do that to ya. By John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. **$2.50**

NIGHTWING #23

DC COMICS Hoo-hah! There's nuthin' like a good monkey story! Nightwing, with buddies in tow including Green Arrow and Robin, takes on something named the Brotherhood of the Monkey in a tale called "Brotherhood of the Fist," a combination that conjures up at least one disturbing image. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. Dixon says, "The good guys fight a whole bunch of monkey cultists in a huge martial-arts battle with kung-fu thrills, in a skyscraper that's now lying sideways after the Gotham Earthquake." Monkey cult? Kung fu? Sideways skyscraper? Sounds like a movie in the making to us! "Sure!" says Dixon. "As long as I get paid and we get a James Bond girl to play the leader of the monkey cult." **$1.95**

PREACHER #40

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Jesse Custer, our boy Preacher, is missing an eye. Jesse's girlfriend Tulip is spiraling down into a hell of booze and tranquilizers. The evil bastard Starr is missing a friggin' leg. The only one whose life is looking up? Arseface, whose music career is booming with the help of his *arsefaced fairy godmother???* This we GOTTA see. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

QUANTUM AND WOODY #17

ACCLAIM COMICS Likely story. Quantum and Woody, formerly the World's Worst Superhero Team, split their partnership and head to Paris. There, the French police (we

said *French* police) capture the dimwitted duo and throw 'em in jail. Yeah, suuuure. Like the French could actually do anything right. By Christopher Priest, Mark Bright and Greg Adams. **$2.50**

ROBIN #56

DC COMICS Pop quiz! The evil Cluemaster has just opened a school for criminals. Robin, our hero, is of school-goin' age. Would Robin: a) Go to class there and bring the teacher an apple; or b) Close the sucker down and stomp Cluemaster's innards to jelly? If you guessed "b," go to the head of the class. By Chuck Dixon, Staz "Coolest First Name in Comics" Johnson and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #64

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "The City," part 4 (of 4), brings us the last of the stand-alone stories featuring the Golden Age Sandman's supporting cast. Detective Burke, the hard-boiled cop who uses the type of bad words that'd make your mother wash your mouth out with soap, has some time off. So he's going to the...snicker...vacation capital of the world: Brooklyn, N.Y.! But is he going for Coney Island? Or murder? Here's a hint: He doesn't like roller coasters. By Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #50

IMAGE This is the big one. It's Dragon versus the Vicious Circle crime gang...to the death! Who wins? One hint: Dragon will *not* appear in *Savage Dragon* #51. This 96-pager

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

80-PAGE GIANTS (DC Comics) *Batman 80-Page Giant* features seven Bat-stories, including tales of the Penguin and Two-Face! The *Flash 80-Page Giant* presents all the Speed Force-usin' heroes, including Barry Allen, Jay Garrick and Max Mercury. **$4.95 each**

BATMAN: THE SCOTTISH CONNECTION (DC Comics) Och! Bruce Wayne discovers his Scottish roots and eats some haggis. Film at 11. **$5.95**

BOOGEYMAN #1 (Dark Horse) Legendary comic humorist Sergio Aragonés pokes fun at horror comics. Laughs are cheap at **$2.95.**

CATWOMAN/WILDCAT #1 (DC Comics) The Cat and the 'cat head to Vegas. Then they box each other. Can't wait to see Catwoman's trunks! *Mwwroww!* **$2.50**

EVIL ERNIE #1 (Chaos! Comics) Ernie takes on the batty vampire goddess Purgatori. Expect lotsa blood. **$2.95**

GEN^{13}/MONKEY MAN & O'BRIEN #1 (Image) All them wacky characters in the title go to a bizarre parallel dimension, where they encounter bizarre parallel versions of themselves. Very bizarre. And very parallel. **$2.50**

JAY & SILENT BOB #1 (Oni Press) Kevin Smith's degenerate slackers catch a bus out of their beloved New Jersey in a tale that fits between Smith's "Chasing Amy" and "Dogma" movies. **$2.95**

JLA: WORLD WITHOUT GROWN-UPS #1 (DC Comics) The Earth is separated into two worlds: KidWorld and AdultWorld. Who's gonna put it all back together? Robin, Superboy and Impulse. Maybe. **$4.95**

LEGION: SCIENCE POLICE #1 (DC Comics) In the 30th Century, one very tired Science Police officer hopes to find help in a new band of heroes called the Ringers—but they hold a secret that could prove fatal. **$2.25**

MARVEL '98 ANNUALS (Marvel) The Hulk goes underwater to escape his problems in *The Hulk & Sub-Mariner*, while the spankin'-new villainous Milennius is introduced in *Silver Surfer & Thor*. And the purple-pussed mass-murderin' bad boy known as Thanos tries to recruit the Hulk to kill everything in *X-Man & The Hulk*. **$2.99 each**

PINT-SIZED X-BABIES: MURDERAMA (Marvel) Awww. The wittle itty-bitty X-Babies from the Mojoverse kick Arcade's ass but good. **$2.99**

RAMPAGING HULK #1 (Marvel) This new series chronicles untold tales from the Hulk's savage past. The dress code calls for torn-up purple pants. **$2.99**

RE:GEX #1 (Awesome Entertainment) Science meets magic as the former bounty hunter known as Scarab fights for the future of humanity. **$2.50**

SMILEY #1 (Chaos! Comics) Chaos!'s psychotic mascot quests for his heart's desire: a little chickadee named Lady Death. **$2.95**

TUG & BUSTER #1 (Image) A very fed-up Stinkfinger drags our two perfectly coiffed heroes to the local art museum for some culture. **$2.95**

WONDER WOMAN: THE ONCE AND FUTURE STORY (DC Comics) Wonder Woman confronts the weighty issue of spousal abuse. **$4.95**

also includes guest pin-ups (One by Todd McFarlane!), hard-to-find old material and an all-new "Freak Force" tale. By Erik Larsen and a cast of thousands. **$5.95**

STORMWATCH #8

IMAGE Hey, lookee there! While peering in on the Earth from their orbital platform, the StormWatch crew has discovered a hole in space that leads to an alternate dimension. With an alternate Earth. And an alternate StormWatch. Think there's gonna be a rumble? Oh, yeah. By Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary. **$2.50**

SUPERMAN ADVENTURES #22

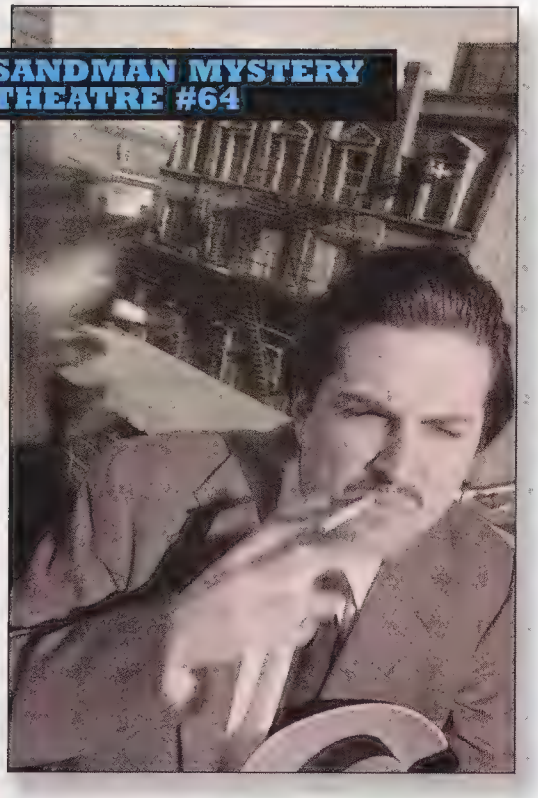
DC COMICS It's the Great Metropolis Blackout! Random power failures muck up computers, public transit and even Jimmy Olsen's Sony PlayStation. So Supes tracks the problems to...his own Fortress of Solitude? We *told* him he shoulda paid the electric bill! By Mark Millar, Aluir Amancio and Terry Austin. **$1.95**

THOR #2

MARVEL Forsooth! It is written that in *Thor* #2, the Odinson shall battle 'gainst the towering Destroyer on Midgard's isle of Manhattan. Even Thor's stalwart comrades, the mighty Avengers, shall be laid low before the awesome power that is the Destroyer, leaving the Thunder God to battle yon monstrosity alone. Will it be an ass-kickin' slobberknocker? Yea, verily. By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #17

MARVEL Graviton, the evil master of (duh) gravity is back and lookin' to kick a little T-Bolt tail. When the Lightningrods (formerly known as the Great Lakes Avengers) throw in, they get mopped by Graviton too. Meanwhile, Baron Zemo's also



SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #64

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

ALPHA FLIGHT #13 (Marvel) One man works on the 13th floor of the mysterious Department H: Basil Kilbrew. And he knows all of Alpha Flight's secrets. **$1.99**

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Batman digs for a mysterious box buried under earthquake rubble in *Batman* #557. In *Detective Comics* #724, Bats and Nightwing fight to maintain order in post-quake Gotham. **$1.95 each**

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #22 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) The Freak! Zombie Spawn! A suicidal teen! Asteroids! Oh my! **$1.95**

THE DARKNESS #16 (Top Cow/Image) Darkness-bearer Jackie Estacado fights Magdalena, chases the Spear of Destiny and takes in a Broadway show. Hope he's got good seats. **$2.50**

DEADPOOL #19 (Marvel) Deadpool tries to take out a massive intergalactic military installation. All by his lonesome. Lotsa luck. **$1.99**

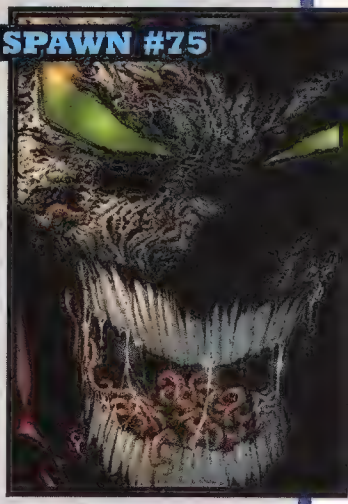
DIVINE RIGHT #8 (WildStorm/Image) It's a family affair as Max Faraday's mentor, Tobruk, takes on his badass brother, Lord Acheron. **$2.50**

GEN^{13} BOOKS (WildStorm/Image) The Gen^{13} crew hits the Florida Keys and finds a million zombies in *Gen^{13}* #30. And in *Gen^{12}* #5, the Team 7 crew decides there are way too many numbers in this write-up and fights Ivana Baiul, who we think is a Romanian Olympic figure skater. **$2.50 each**

INCREDIBLE HULK #467 (Marvel) Rharggh! Hulk in future story! Hulk reflect on his recent past! This Peter David's last issue writing *Hulk*! Hulk sad. Rharggh! **$1.99**

JLA SECRET FILES #2 (DC Comics) A whopping 48 pages of behind-the-scenes stuff tells ya everything ya ever wanted ta know about the JLA. And then some! **$3.95**

SPAWN #75 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) A new revelation is laid on Spawn as he finds his mission on Earth ain't what he has thought it was for...oh...74 issues or so. **$1.95**



SPAWN #75

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) Spidey and the Black Cat visit Murderworld in *Sensational Spider-Man* #30, and all we get is a lousy T-shirt. In *Amazing Spider-Man* #437, Web-head faces the awesome fury of (hee, hee) Plantman! In *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #94, Spidey tracks the mysterious Joey Z. And *Spectacular Spider-Man* #260 features a knock-down, drag-out battle between the original Green Goblin and original Hobgoblin. **$1.99 each**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Guri the fugitive droid is on the run in *Shadows of the Empire–Evolution* #5. And shiver ye timbers, 'cause the rogues face off against pirates in *X-Wing Rogue Squadron* #31. **$2.95 each**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Flash forward to the Superman of 2999 A.D. in *Superman* #137. Then flash back to a bizarre Silver Age Superman story in *Adventures of Superman* #560. Disco with a 1970s Superman in *Action Comics* #747. Finally, get back to the present in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #82 and count your frequent-flier miles. **$1.95 each**

WILDC.A.T.S #50 (WildStorm/Image) Four chapters reveal the team's new costumes in this anniversary bang-up sportin' a funky Jim Lee cover. **$3.50**

WITCHBLADE #24 (Top Cow/Image) Guest artist Jason Pearson helps reveal the shocking secret behind the death of Sara Pezzini's father. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #127 (Marvel) Having just defeated (What the?) Wolverine last ish, Sabretooth turns his attentions to beating up the whole nation of Madripoor. **$1.99**

heading in for the kill. It's a bad day on Planet Thunderbolt. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #12

HELIX/DC COMICS *Transmet* #12 is by Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. We cannot possibly compare to the mind-altering substance that is Warren Ellis, so we'll just let him tell you all about this chapter in the life of outlaw journalist Spider Jerusalem: "It's a real family issue. We find out what happened to Spider's cryogenically frozen wife. We find out if Spider is a father, and if so, why his child has no head. Oh! Oh, yeah! We also find out exactly how to remove a human body from a toilet. I promise it will involve a cutting torch." **MR $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #358

MARVEL The five original X-Persons (Angel, Beast, Cyclops, Iceman and Phoenix) are ready to break out in a new direction under Cyclops' leadership. Meanwhile, X-Man Bishop is still on a spaceship with the psychotic alien princess known as Deathbird, and their "relationship" goes a little sour. By Steve Seagle and Chris Bachalo. **$1.99**

UNKNOWN SOLDIER TPB

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Low-level CIA agent William Clyde delves into the most dangerous territory of all: the history of the Unknown Soldier! Who's he? Why, just the secret operative who's mopped up every dirty little war the U.S. has been in for the last 50 years, that's who! But when the 'Soldier finds out that a pencil-pusher is after his secrets, he makes Clyde the offer of a lifetime. Reprinting the four-issue mini-series by Garth Ennis and Kilian Plunkett. **MR $12.95**

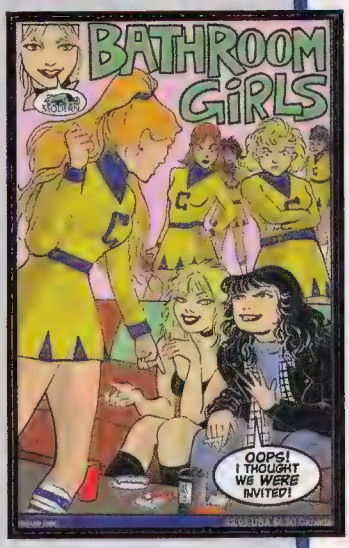
on the edge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

BATHROOM GIRLS #2

(MILLENNIUM PUBLISHING)

Just what do chicks talk about when they go to the bathroom? We'd like to find out, but all this book tells us is that the Bathroom Girls of Colesquo High can be bad as any boys. Outsiders Madeline, Erika and Sophie drink, smoke, fight and even steal a car. Then—Horror of horrors!—they crash a cheerleader party! Whatever will they do next? Well, if we could make a two-word recommendation, it'd start with "panty" and end with "raid." **$2.95**



X-MEN #78

MARVEL The Shadow King is the new top o' the heap on the psionic plane. Psylocke's been reduced to a big blobby mess and Jean Grey's out for the count. So it's up to the rest o' the X-Men to knock him off his throne. But without a telepath, what chance do everyone's favorite muties really have? Umm...probably none. By Joe Kelly and German Garcia. Kelly says, "The story really focuses on Storm, Psylocke and this woman who's sort of Storm's foster mother. What's gonna happen to Psylocke now that she's this big blob we saw at the end of #77? Well, she manifests different strange powers from the Crimson Dawn and has to make a really big sacrifice to defeat the Shadow King. Plus, the new kids are all sort of offered their hearts' desire. But will they betray the X-Men for the promise of what the Shadow King offers?" **$1.99**

YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #15

DC COMICS And you thought "pin the tail on the donkey" could get ugly. Junior, the Young Heroes member whose only power is the fact that he's four inches tall, faces the menace of...Birthday Boy! By Dan Raspler, Dev Madan and Keith Champagne. Raspler tells us that Birthday Boy is "a maniac who kidnaps groups of children and demands presents. It's kinda stressful for the kids." And stressful for Junior. "He really wouldn't stand much of a chance against Birthday Boy, 'cause BB's a big, strappin', violent man. So Junior has to spring a trap on him, centering on Birthday Boy's obsession with blowing out candles." Fun for the whole family. Unwrap this sucker when it hits stores on Wednesday, June 24. Cake, ice cream and Kool-Aid will be served at 3:00. **$1.95**

REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND MIKE SEARLE

CABLE

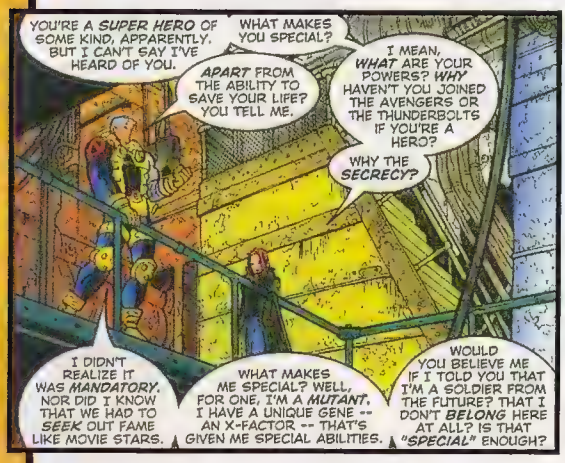
'Cable' channels good characters

ISSUES REVIEWED: #48-#55
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: James Robinson (#48-#50), Joe Casey (#51-#55), José Ladrónn and Juan Vlasco
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Sent back in time from 2,000 years in the future, Nathan Summers (a.k.a. Cable), gifted with the powers of telepathy and telekinesis, has one mission—to stop the evil Apocalypse before he can set in motion the events which will create Cable's dark future.

The Good: Amid a promising setup which involves the Hellfire Club hunting a newspaper reporter who's uncovered its secret plans, *Cable*'s characters shine forth. Reporter Irene Merryweather is likable, good-natured, tough and, as an everyday person, provides a great link for readers to jump into the story. The loner Cable comes across as heroic and reserved, yet passionate; above all, he's Machiavellian in his pursuit of his mission, which is finally spelled out for us—kill Apocalypse to save the future. To illustrate Cable's "the ends justify the means" mentality, issue #52 has Cable accept the aid of an ex-Nazi war criminal.

The artwork's Jack Kirby-meets-manga style paves new ground with panels so beautifully detailed that you can spend hours studying the artwork. From the *Inquiring Eye* news office (issue #48) to the Boston skyline (issue #49), the artist's eye for detail is masterful. The action-packed layouts are gripping and don't let go—just check out the scene of Cable breaking into Donald Pierce's security-tight home (issue #49).



The Bad: The six-part "The Hellfire Hunt" storyline (issues #48-#53) is a huge letdown! Though it has a setup that sucks us right in, the rest of the pacing is way too slow. The story should have been told in three issues and ended with issue #50, when Cable confronts the Hellfire Club for the first time; instead, it's drawn out to six issues and bogged down with three extra, anticlimatic issues. On top of all that, the storyline centers around the Hellfire Club and Cable hunting Apocalypse, who *never even shows up* till a lame cameo in the epilogue.

Though we like the artwork, it doesn't seem to fit with *Cable*. As stunning as the backgrounds are, the figures evoke too much of a "retro" look with their Kirby-esque renderings. In a book so heavily involved with the future, old-fashioned-looking figures seem out of place and distracting, particularly when placed in a ultra-detailed backdrop.

The Buzz: *Cable*'s popularity is rising as José Ladrónn's refreshingly different art style gains a following and Joe Casey's strong writing earns him another Marvel book, *The Incredible Hulk*, starting this summer.

The Skinny: We're attracted to the characters, but *Cable*'s stories need to be more focused in order to allow these characters to flourish. We'll stick around to see if the plots pick up. ■

You said it, Cable! The slow plotting of issues #51-#53 killed the awesome setup of "The Hellfire Hunt."

Both Robinson and Casey have made the characters in Cable *shine for the first time* ever.

THE GRADE: C+

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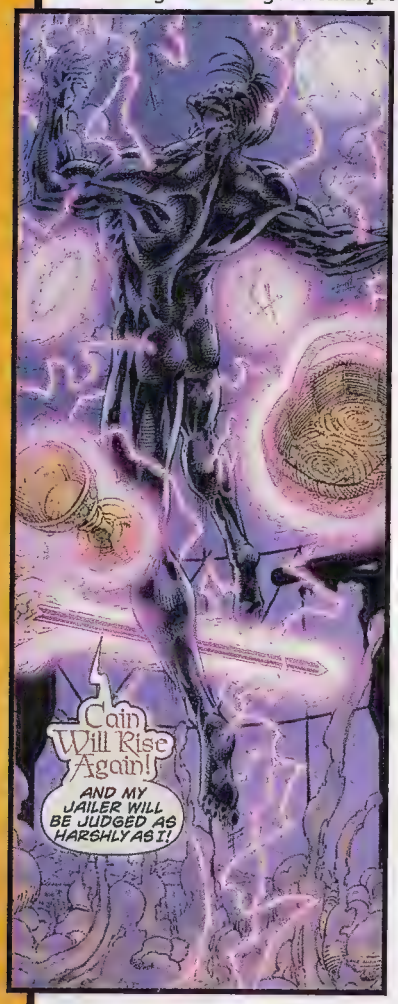
THE COVEN
A confusing brew

ISSUES REVIEWED: #1–#5
GENRE: Fantasy action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Awesome Entertainment
CREATIVE TEAM: Jeph Loeb, Ian Churchill and Norm Rapmund
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/ Kinda monthly

What You Need to Know: Uh... there's this group called the Coven made up of five people (Blackmass, Fantom, Scratch, Spellcaster and Phenomena) with special powers, who somehow join forces and go around for the sole purpose of...uh...stopping something. And...uh...they know all about...uh...something.

The Good: The art has a nice clean style that conveys some interesting visuals. A good example from issue #4 shows the villainess Pentacle throwing an astral star at Fantom, knocking her astral body out of her corporeal one.



Along those lines, there's some pretty interesting character stuff as well. Scratch is a Catholic priest who's been possessed by a mischievous demon. Phenomena, who's got non-supermodel looks, is a breath of fresh air among the tons of hot chicks roaming today's market. And finally, the *initial* mystery surrounding just who or what the Coven is, is actually intriguing—particularly Phenomena's "Who do you trust?" predicament of the first two issues.

The Bad: We can sum up this book in one word: Huh? *Coven* is so insanely confusing, we're confused as to what the point of the series is. We originally thought it was to stop the evil group Pentad from acquiring five objects of power, as we were told in issue #3. But apparently we were wrong when the objects were all found the next issue. Then there's all the Cain and Abel biblical references throughout the series, which culminate in Cain's resurrection (we think). The lack of vital plot information completely baffled us.

As for the characters themselves, it's unfortunate that the only characterization we get is the little intro biographies on the inside front cover. We'd rather read and learn about these guys through the stories, *not* through a small paragraph that sums up their lives before we've even started the issue. Learning about Scratch's demonic possession could be really cool, but in the story, all we see of this is one demon calling him a traitor (#3). And after Spellcaster's mother is killed by the Pentad, she suddenly joins up with the Coven. But we're wondering how she's even connected with them in the first place. She just suddenly joins the team when Blackmass shows up.

And on a more minor-yet-annoying point, for absolutely no reason whatsoever, random words are colored red. Not only are these distracting, but they serve no purpose.

The Buzz: Sales are doing well enough on *The Coven* that it's survived the recent Awesome purge, which cut the company's line down to the bare bones.

The Skinny: No point. No purpose. Little characterization. Besides all that, we have no idea where to begin to criticize *The Coven*. Heck, the only reason this book didn't flunk is because it has creative visuals and is a super-quick read. ■

Coven *has a nice art style with cool visuals, like the KO-ing of Fantom's astral body.*

Uhhh...what happened? This "revelation" baffled us in issue #4.

THE GRADE: D

CATWOMAN
Pick of the litter box

ISSUES REVIEWED: #51-#56
GENRE: Supervillain action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Doug Moench (#51-#53), Devin Grayson (#54-#56), Jim Balent and John Stanisci
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Growing up on the streets of Gotham City, Selina Kyle was inspired by Gotham's other vigilante, Batman. Now, as Catwoman, she dresses up like a cat and steals from the rich to give to...well, herself.

The Good: Catwoman's got her personality back, particularly with Devin Grayson's issues. With Grayson as the new regular writer on the book, readers can peek more inside Kyle's criminal mind. Trapped in an elevator during Gotham's earthquake (issue #56), Catwoman freaks out, until her survival instincts kick in and she saves herself. Even Catwoman's civilian persona is getting some personality. When her apartment's annoying doorman beefs up security after she casually mentions some guy's bothering her, Kyle jokes to herself, "Note to self: frame doorman for building theft" (#55).

Jim Balent's art is purrfect (sorry, we couldn't resist). It's smooth, energetic and his rendition of Catwoman is the sexiest we've ever seen. And a neat little touch is that Balent hides a tiny little cat (or cats) somewhere on just about every cover.

The Bad: No matter how great she looks, *Catwoman*'s plots are predictable and sometimes downright hokey. Take the Headhunter serial killer storyline that wrapped up in #53. It turns out the killer was really a cop Kyle was dating. Even if you hadn't been following the Headhunter subplot for a while, you could see this revelation coming from a mile away. Then there's Catty's unlikely team-up with the Huntress (#51-#52), which was extremely forced, particularly its ending where Huntress turned on Catwoman. Even a semi-interesting plot like #55 falls flat; someone's stalking Kyle, sending her tickets to the Broadway production of "Cats" and notes reading, "I know who you *really* are." But after she goes undercover and interacts with the guy in disguise, you never find out *why* he was after Kyle in the first place. Plus, we're supposed to believe a stalker wouldn't notice a strangely familiar woman with the same exact build was around him all those times?

The dialogue, mainly in #51-#53, is stilted and forced, adding virtually no depth to the characters. And speaking of characters, there's no supporting cast. Sure, later issues flesh out her neighbors a little, but for the most part, the only semi-recurring players are Kyle's 19 pet kitty-cats.

The Buzz: The recent "Cataclysm" storyline brought more readers to this title, and with Grayson as *Catwoman*'s regular writer and artist Balent not goin' anywhere (He's penciled *every* issue of this series!), expect this book's following to continue.

The Skinny: Weak characterization, predictable plotting and virtually no supporting cast make *Catwoman* a pretty dull book starring a pretty character. But with Grayson on board, the stories are picking up as she adds some much-needed depth to Gotham's premier thief. ■

Issue #56 gives great insight into Kyle's humanity, as she watches over a dying child.

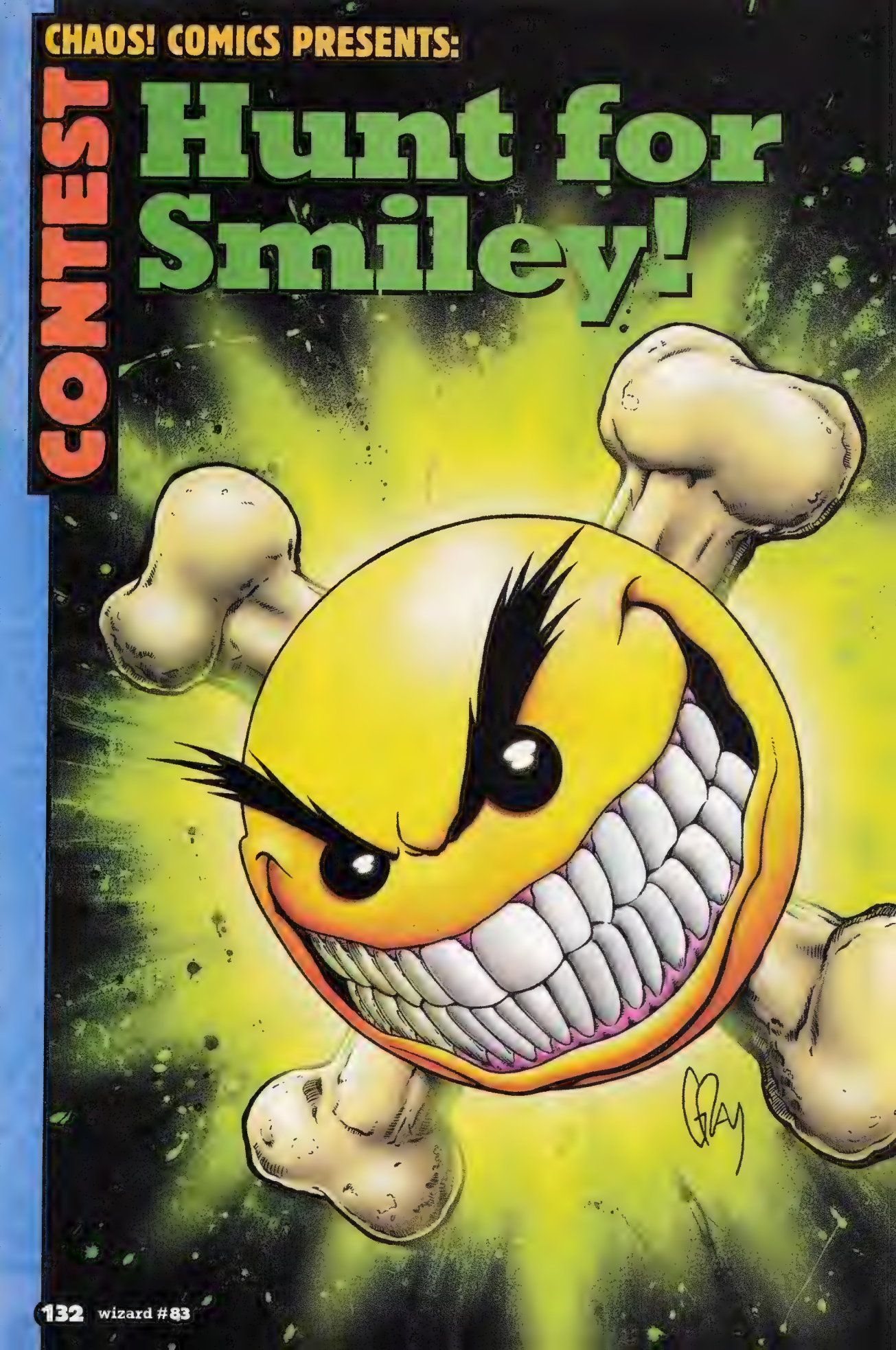
We saw the clichéd lover/cop/serial killer revelation coming from a mile away.

THE GRADE: C

CHAOS! COMICS PRESENTS:

CONTEST

Hunt for Smiley!



June is Smiley Month! "Who?" Y'know, the psychotic button who's Evil Ernie's wise-crackin' li'l buddy! All you have to do to help celebrate (and win that cool loot below) is to go through every single page of this kick-ass issue and hunt down the renegade Smileys. Keep count of how many times you come across his smiling mug, and put that number on the entry form below. We'll choose the winners randomly from everyone who sends in the correct number of Smileys located in this issue. Be sure to check every page. Smiley's a crafty little bugger, and you never know where he'll turn up.

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One smiling somebody wins the one-shot comic *Smiley* #1 autographed by writer Jesse McCann, artist Ivan Reis and cover artist Jack Gray, the *Smiley* #1 *Mystery Premium Edition*, a Smiley poster, the Smiley bumper sticker, a Smiley mouse pad, a Smiley vanity license plate, a groovy Smiley watch and all the Smiley original art done by Gray and used throughout this issue.

FIRST PRIZE (5): Five happy fellas each win *Smiley* #1 autographed by writer Jesse McCann, artist Ivan Reis and cover artist Jack Gray, a Smiley poster, the Smiley bumper sticker, a Smiley mouse pad, a Smiley vanity license plate and a groovy Smiley watch.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten cheery chaps each win *Smiley* #1 autographed by writer Jesse McCann, artist Ivan Reis and cover artist Jack Gray.

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For a list of winners, available after August 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Hunt for Smiley!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Hunt for Smiley!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JULY 31, 1998!

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In this action-packed anime adventure, Shuranosuke is hired by the Tokugawa Shogunate to rescue Princess Mayu from the clutches of a group of bandit ninjas. They will stop at nothing to prevent him from succeeding and call on the undead spirits of the Seki Ninjas in Hell to assist them.

Shuranosuke's skills are put to the ultimate test as he leaves a trail of blood and severed limbs behind him in a desperate attempt to save the Princess. Watch this classic samurai adventure and find out why Shuranosuke is a cut above the rest.

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From The Director Of Tetsuo II - Body Hammer!

Tsukamoto's two Tetsuo movies took body-horror just about as far as it could go, and this new shocker punches into a new combat zone. The director plays insurance salesman Tsuda, whose life with his fiancee Hizuru is turned upside down when he meets his old high-school classmate, Takuji, now a boxing pro with problems.

In no time at all, Hizuru is making moves on Takuji, while Tsuda himself starts training in a boxing gym. What was the half-forgotten incident which bonded Tsuda and Takuji in their youth?

Tokyo Fist explores a love triangle that couldn't be more in tune with the times: the 'new' man gets body conscious, the macho man gets nightmares and the hip young woman flexes her opinions. This is psycho-kinetic film making in the patented Tsukamoto style - bloody, convulsive, tender and blackly comic.

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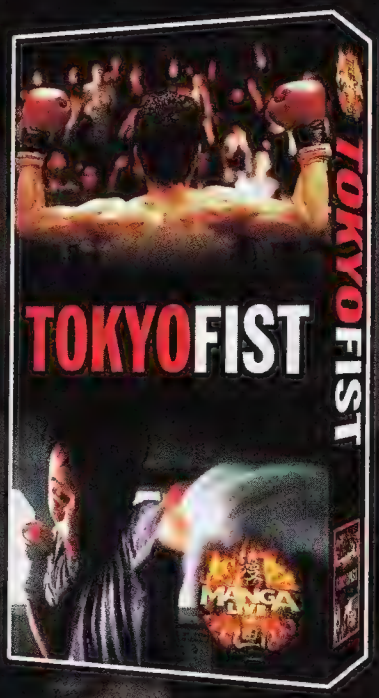

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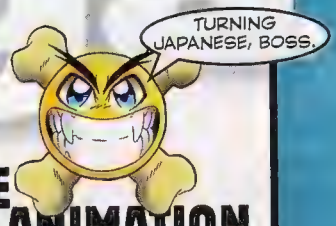


SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Video game titles make the leap into manga and anime–and vice versa

"Ha-dou-ken!" Street Fighter Ryu's curled fist flies through the air, cutting like a knife, stinging like a killer bee, and connecting with the chest of a huge, shirtless behemoth named Sagat. Sagat falls like Niagara, kicking up a huge cloud of dust and moaning like a foghorn. It's like something out of a video game.

The lines are so blurred between video games, manga and anime, it might be hard to tell where this scene is from. So it's no surprise that fighters from the *Street Fighter*, *Darkstalkers*, *Battle Arena Toshinden* and *Fatal Fury* video game series are appearing in anime and manga, and anime and manga titles (*Dragon Ball* and *Ghost in the Shell*, to name two) are popping up as video games on Sony PlayStations everywhere.

It's not difficult to see why these media crossovers have become prevalent. Once a video, comic or game proves itself to be a solid hit, it becomes prime fodder to make the jump into another medium. Nothing, it seems, sells better than something that already sells well. And so the great manga, anime and video game crossover flood has begun.

While the quality of some translations is poor at best, some titles make the jump between media without losing a drop of their appeal. An excellent example of a video game adaptation that works is THQ's aforementioned *Ghost in the Shell* for the PlayStation. It succeeds not only because of its interesting gameplay—especially the process of learning to master its unique weapon, a cyber-controlled one-man tank called a "Fuchikoma"—but due to its staying true to the character designs and concepts of Masamune Shirow's original *Ghost* manga and anime.

Manga Entertainment's release of the "Street Fighter II V" anime based on Capcom's hit game series takes advantage of 30 half-hour episodes to do a full expansion of the game's characters and their fighting styles. "SF II V" proves that the various elements that make a game can make an epic video series as well. Sure, the videos are littered with tremendous fight scenes, but there's also a great deal of character interaction and suspense—not to mention an edgy story revolving around the Street Fighters' quest to ruin a drug ring. In the end, the fan can't help but be satisfied at how true the spirit of the adaptation is.

Regardless of the medium, whether these crossovers work or don't work isn't a matter of abstract design or marketing theory—it all boils down to a fan's choice, and sometimes, his tolerance. Someone who doesn't play a lot of video games, but who loves *Dragon Ball* as a manga or anime, might be pleased to discover the PlayStation game *Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout*. It presents training sequences in the martial-arts spirit of the title, along with the option to play the game as the hero Goku at different ages, just as he appears in the original comic book story. A dedicated game player, though, may give that same *Dragon Ball GT* a thumbs-down because its play is slow and clumsy, and its multiple-version characters are just confusing to someone unfamiliar with the original manga or anime.

'BATTLE' CHASERS The heroes from *Battle Arena Toshiden* have gone from the PlayStation to anime.

BY CARL GUSTAV HORN

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA

(Urban Vision, 104 mins., $24.95/$29.95 dubbed/subtitled)

"Yeaaahhhh, baby!" Return to the days of "shag-o-delic" anime with one of the trippiest sci-fi films ever made, Osamu Dezaki's ("Black Jack") "Space Adventure Cobra." You may have seen some of "Cobra" on MTV when singer Matthew Sweet used footage from the movie in his famous buzz-clip video for "Girlfriend." Now, the entire shebang is coming to America.

In the distant future, the man with the Seventh Galaxy's biggest price on his head is the pirate, smuggler and thief Cobra—but he's far too busy having a good time to worry about it! With a cigar in his mouth, a gleam in his eye and the invincible "Psychogun" for a left arm, Cobra's attracting the attention of buxom bounty hunter Jane Royal. But when both become the targets of the Mafia Guild, Cobra and Jane blast off-planet together, because there's a much bigger danger than the space mob linking them. It's got something to do with Jane and her two beautiful sisters being a wandering planet's lost princesses, whose power can conquer the galaxy—or destroy it! ■

KISSING CANVAS All-around rogue Cobra hits hard times (and the floor) after running into the Mafia Guild.

STREET SMARTS Street Fighter Ken Masters from "Street Fighter II V" demonstrates his faith in Sure underarm deodorant.

And sometimes, in the attempt to translate titles—especially in the case of turning games into manga or anime—the creators fall into the trap of trying to capture too much in too little space or time. When watching the anime "Street Fighter II" (not to be confused with the "Street Fighter II V" series), it appears at times to be nothing but a frenzied attempt to jam as many characters on the screen at once as possible. Sharp-eyed fans of the game series may thrill to see Akuma as a street beggar in a crowd shot, but discerning anime fans might be put off by the film's blatant "checklist" mentality.

On this subject, Masashi Ikeda, director of the anime adaptation of Capcom's *Darkstalkers*, has said in an interview, "Every single one of the characters [in the game] is the main character...because each player of the video game would have vested sympathies with the player he uses." Furthermore, Ikeda notes, the games are designed that way: Every character is given an origin story, "so they could all potentially be the protagonist."

It's another reminder that adaptation is all about what you choose to bring in and choose to leave behind. The anime fan looks at "Darkstalkers" and is pleased with its elegant and moody style, and says, "It's great!" The game fan looks at it and remembers the original game was cartoony and goofy, and says, "Huh?"

Freelance writer Carl Horn once had a Bubblegum Crisis when someone splashed hot water on him and he turned into a Super Saiyan with a monkey's tail. What's with that, Carl?

F.Y.I.

MORE INFO

Dragon Ball and its sequel *Dragon Ball Z* (each monthly from Viz Comics) and *Ghost in the Shell* (the graphic novel from Dark Horse Comics) are titles that began as manga but are just as well-known as video games and anime. There have been at least 25 video games based on *Dragon Ball/Dragon Ball Z*, for the Nintendo, Super Nintendo, Game Boy, PlayStation and Saturn systems; the most recent incarnations include *Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout* for the PlayStation and the import *Dragon Ball Legends* for the Saturn. Several volumes of the "Dragon Ball Z" anime series are now available in America from Pioneer Entertainment. *Ghost in the Shell* is available not only as a PlayStation game, but in seven different versions as an 80-minute anime film from Manga Entertainment.

Street Fighter II is available in three different manga adaptations from Viz Comics. The anime adaptations of *Street Fighter II* include the movie by Sony Wonder/Renegade Home Video and the TV series "Street Fighter II V" from Manga Entertainment.

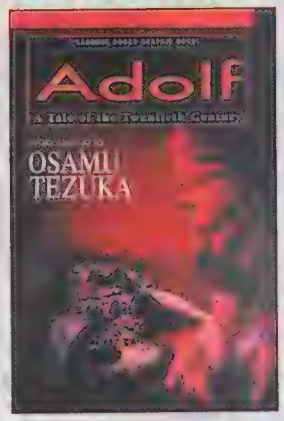
Capcom's *Darkstalkers* has entered the world of anime as the video series "Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge" from Viz Video. *Battle Arena Toshinden* is now available as an anime from U.S. Manga Corps, and as a one-shot manga story by game character designer Tsukasa Kotobuki (in issue #4 of *Game On! USA* from Viz Comics).

MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN JUNE

ADOLF HARDCOVER EDITIONS

VIZ COMICS



These beautiful hardcover editions are the most elegant presentation ever given a manga in America—a fitting treatment for *Adolf*, a historical epic by Osamu Tezuka, the late "God of Manga." During World War II, the lives of three different men named Adolf, including Adolf Hitler himself, become intertwined in conspiracy when evidence arises that Hitler's hatred of Jews stems from his greatest secret: He is of Jewish blood himself! A powerful five-volume tale about surviving racism and war, based on both speculation and fact, *Adolf* is the work of Japan's master manga storyteller.

CUTIE HONEY VOLUME 2 #1

STUDIO IRONCAT

Ironcat's the only U.S. company today producing manga from the man so hated in the '70s by the Japanese PTA, but so loved by today's generation of creators when they were kids—Go Nagai! And no wonder, when he was giving them stories like this, where an investigation by sexy android Honey reveals that global warming is leading to the terrible phenomenon of the topless beach! Is the villainess Sister Jill (airbrushed on the cover by glamour king Hajime Sorayama) responsible? The book may have been for kids in Japan, but it's for mature readers here!

EAT-MAN VOL. 1: FULL-COURSE MEAL

VIZ COMICS

He looks like Jay from "Clerks" with his long hair, coat and cap, but the only thing Bolt Crank's inhaling are miscellaneous machine parts—that's why they call him "Eat-Man"! Crank's a mercenary with the weird power to consume any device—gun, sword or radio—and then regenerate it out of his own body as needed. Too strange? Eat-Man says, "I couldn't care less if you believe me or not!" "Full-Course Meal" collects the first six issues of *Eat-Man*.

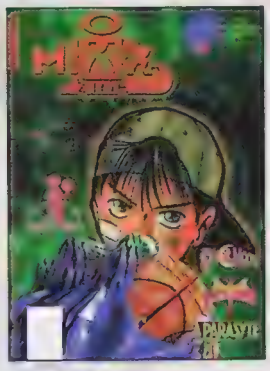
GUNSMITH CATS: BAD TRIP #1 (of 6)

DARK HORSE COMICS

Chicago: It's Ken'ichi Sonoda's kind of town—to set his crime manga *Gunsmith Cats*! It'd be hard enough for bounty hunter Rally to fight off the advances of Italy's worst export, drug lord/hitwoman Goldie, even if she were "straight," but now that Rally's been shot up with a hallucinogen, it's going to be damn near impossible! Will she be the next recruit in Goldie's personal stable of brainwashed girls, or will she manage to do a little shooting back of her own? As George Takei (from "Star Trek") would say, "Oh, my!" *Gunsmith Cats* purrs for mature readers only.

MIXXZINE #6

MIXX PUBLICATIONS



The bimonthly manga anthology magazine on slick paper marks its first year by introducing a new fourth story, "Harlem Beat." From the barely-tapped-here (but immensely popular in Japan) manga genre of sports comics, "Harlem Beat" is a basketball comedy set on the streets of Tokyo. *Mixxzine* #6 includes the continuation of schoolgirls saving Earth in "Sailor Moon," and people saving other planets in "Magic Knight Rayearth," as well as the cleanly slicing fun of a schoolboy fighting an alien invasion (with the help of an alien trapped in his hand) in "Parasyte"!

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW #11 (of 13)

DARK HORSE COMICS

The seemingly never-ending struggle between a human research team trapped on a space station with the rapidly evolving (and extremely destructive) artificial intelligence Spartacus takes a novel turn as Dr. Dyer theorizes that the computer may become curious enough about humans not to wipe them out! But destruction for the hapless crew may then come from their fellow men—as a panicked military threatens to terminate their disastrous experiment with a hydrogen bomb! ■

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH By Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

'CLERKS' RINGS UP!

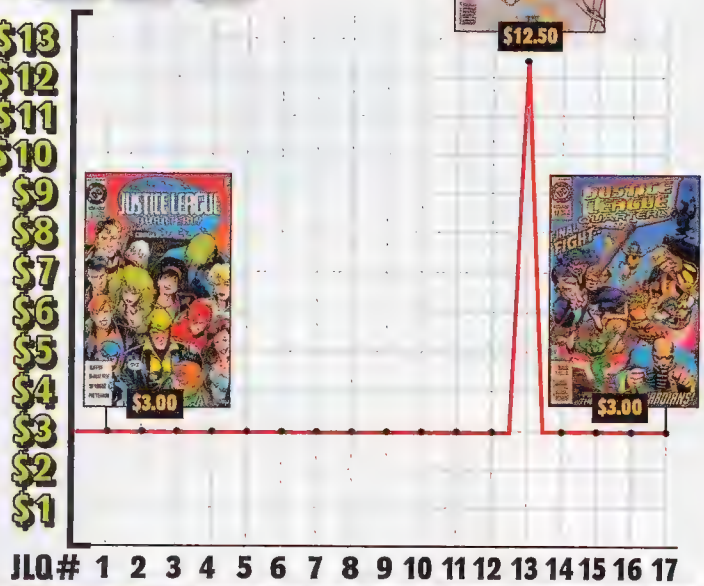
Oni Press pumps up with top creators

They're nasty. They're surly. They give horrible service. They're the "Clerks," and they sell comics like crazy.

New publisher Oni Press has its first certifiable hit in *Clerks*, a one-shot starring Dante and Randal, the over-the-counter register jockeys from Kevin Smith's hit 1994 movie "Clerks." The comic has serious name power—it's written by Smith himself—and an added bonus: This ain't your typical dialogue-butchered movie adaptation. Rather, *Clerks* features a completely original high-stress romp concerning insider Star Wars toy trading. Name recognition and a cool story-buzz took over, and *Clerks* sold out instantly. A second printing was ordered, and *that* sold out.

And it doesn't stop there; *Oni Double Feature* #1 was also a sell-out. The driving force? Kevin Smith again, and a Matt Wagner-drawn story featuring Jay and Silent Bob, the recurring characters seen in all of Smith's movies. *ODF* #1 has also gone into a second printing, and prices are *still* climbing. It's all part of what looks like a surge for Oni, the new li'l publisher with big names.

MOVING PICTURES Kevin Smith-written Oni titles are flyin'. (And hey–that *Clerks* is autographed by Smith and artist Jim Mahfood!)



LINSNER'S PEAK A cover by famed "good girl" artist Joseph Michael Linsner can have quite the market effect, as shown by these *Justice League Quarterly* values. (Source: Current *Wizard* price guide.)

The success of Oni—a Japanese word for "demon"—largely lies with co-publisher Bob Schreck, a well-connected former editor from Comico and Dark Horse. Schreck has stocked Oni's arsenal with top-notch talent such as Smith, Wagner (*Mage*), Grant Morrison (*JLA*), Paul Grist (*Kane*), Frank Miller (*Sin City*) and Simon Bisley (*Lobo*).

Fanboys looking to the future may want to check out Oni one-shots like *St. Swithin's Day* from Morrison and Grist or *Bad Boy* by Miller and Bisley. If Oni continues to hit the bull's-eye in terms of story value, the company'll be hard to beat in terms of monetary value.

THE LINSNER EFFECT

As pretty as covers and pin-ups can be, they rarely boost prices all by themselves. The notable exception to this rule: pieces by *Dawn* creator Joseph Michael Linsner, whose fans—and we say this lovingly—are completely, rabidly nuts.

Linsner-mania is so scientific that many fans keep computer databases of all his work and chase obscure books like *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* and *Coven of Angels* (Huh?) which sport Linsner covers.

Therefore, it's a good bet Linsner books will either keep their value or rise steadily in price. In some cases, a Linsner book is the *only* book in a run fans may care about. An

example: *Justice League Quarterly*, a title that's total bird-chow *except* for issue #13—which has a cover by Linsner. That cover alone is enough to make it worth four times the cover price.

Here's a short list of books featuring Linsner art you might be passing over, each worth much more than the issues surrounding them: *Paradox* #1 (cover; from Dark Visions), *Razor* #5 (cover; London Night Studios), *Safety-Belt Man* #4 (back cover; Sirius) and *Zorro* #11 (cover; Topps). Keep an eye out for them.

WARREN KICKS 'BOOTLEG'

Lights...camera...action! While most issues of the spinoff series *Gen[13] Bootleg* collect more lint than your bellybutton, *Bootleg* #8-#10, containing the now-infamous "Grunge: The Movie" story arc, are afterburning through the back-issue market. And this arc's success has all but single-handedly assured the future of manga-style writer and artist Adam Warren.

One of the most offbeat *Gen[13]* stories ever, "Grunge: The Movie" is a tale wherein Gen[13]er Grunge fantasizes about a movie in which he's a well-sexed, bullet-pumping, Hong Kong action-theater hero. The story has ignited Warren's back-issue life—damn good for an artist who's spent the last 10 years on several under-the-fan-radar *Dirty Pair* mini-series for Dark Horse and Eclipse.

Now that he's lookin' mainstream, you may wanna look in the direction of Warren's work on the 1997 *Titans: Scissors, Paper, Stone* Elseworlds one-shot from DC and in the just-released *C.H.I.X.* #1, the heroine-based Image book featuring a Warren short story.

DECENT PROPOSAL Warren and Gen[13] make for a great marriage.

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, DAVID, ADAM KUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, SEAGLE, TURNER, WAID, Z. BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. MORRISON BY BOB MARTIN. ROBINSON BY AL ORTEGA, ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANCHNOTER, BACHALO COURTESY OF MARVEL COMICS, PEREZ BY BRIAN SMITH.

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Astro City, Avengers

2. Joe Kelly
Deadpool, X-Men

3. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

4. Mark Waid
Captain America, JLA: Year One

5. Steven T. Seagle
Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight

6. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

7. Peter David
Hulk, Supergirl

8. Matt Wagner
Mage

9. James Robinson
Starman

10. Christina Z.
Witchblade

ARTISTS

1. Michael Turner
Witchblade

2. Jim Lee
Divine Right

3. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

4. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

5. Alex Ross
upcoming: *Superman: PoE*

6. Adam Kubert
Incredible Hulk

7. Andy Kubert
Captain America

8. Chris Bachalo
Uncanny X-Men

9. George Pérez
The Avengers

10. Leinil Yu
Wolverine

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

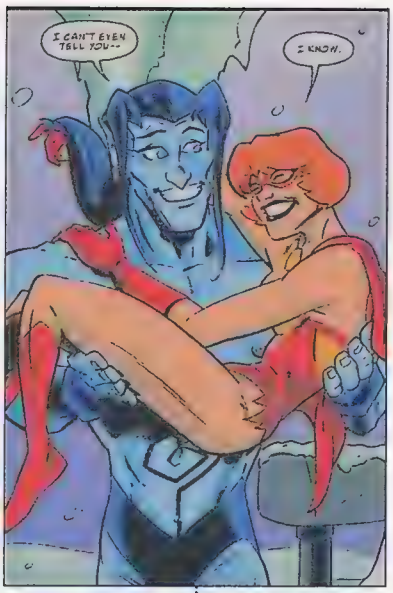
TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #1

The Thunderbolts: America's favorite villains-turned-heroes-turned-something. Their debut in *Incredible Hulk* #449 and their ongoing title's premiere in *Thunderbolts* #1 both go for big bucks. But few realize that *Tales of the Marvel Universe* #1, with an original 'bolts story by series creators Kurt Busiek and Mark Bagley, was released between the two!

Squeeze-play should make this baby's price go up, as completists scramble to collect every Thunderbolts appearance. You can still get *Tales* #1 for about $4 today–but only if you're quick as lightning and find a copy. ■ LP

Don't ignore these issues if Warren's career goes wildfire.

That could happen with Warren's upcoming 1998 projects, including a Gen[13] mini-series tentatively titled *Magical Drama Queen Roxy*—in which Freefall dreams she's a short-skirted, magic-wielding heroine similar to Sailor Moon—and a Superman/Dirty Pair crossover. Whiplash from these should further increase Warren's profile. So keep watching Warren and the shamelessly clad females he draws...as if you needed an excuse.



WINTER LOVIN' Young Heroes heat the market up.

NUGGETS YOU WANNA KNOW

• ***Babylon 5* (DC)**—With a new home on TNT, the "Babylon 5" TV series has a wider audience than ever. But comic material on the space-adventure show is still scarce. Reader attention (and dollars) are focused on the meager 14 *Babylon 5* comics that have been made, 11 from a canceled monthly and a three from a recent mini-series. These have found a new audience: "B5" comics have become items-to-get at sci-fi conventions, and prices are on the rise.

• ***Transmetropolitan* (Helix/DC)**—Okay, so the bulk of the Helix line is used more often as fishwrap than reading material. But *Transmetropolitan*, written by wacky Warren Ellis (*StormWatch*) and cleanly drawn by Darick Robertson (*New Warriors*), is a bright spot. The futuristic political satire story of journalist Spider Jerusalem had a dinky print run early on, and even though issues #1-#3 were collected in the *Back on the Street* trade paperback, there's still a shortage. Prices increase as interest increases.

• ***Young Heroes in Love* (DC)**—Those randy Young Heroes have an extremely loyal following that seems to grow by small degrees every month. Like *Transmetropolitan*, early issues of this series had a puny print run. But to date, *nothing* has yet been collected in paperback. Result: Prepare to pay big for young lovin'.

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson knows all about paying for love. It's currently on sale at Target for $4.99 a gallon.

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Nanuet, NY 10954
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Eldorado Comics
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Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

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Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
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Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
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TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1. KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: Angel Medina and Kevin Conrad

It took four months of climbin', but *KISS: The Psycho Circus* #1 finally hit tippity-top. What does this mean for you and me? Not a great deal. The sun still rises and sets, a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet and Circus Peanuts are still a foul, alien toxin. Plus KISS continues to be a huge merchandising bonanza after more'n two decades. Oh, and one last thing: Todd McFarlane still has more money than you. **LAST MONTH:** 3

2 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: Joe Madureira, Andy Smith, Tim Townsend, Vince Russell and Dan Panosian

Red-hot X-titles haven't been too common since Onslaught packed his bags. But this issue's caught on for two reasons: That Cajun cad Gambit gets the boot, *and* Magneto returns! But the big news? The Gambit-has-a-mysterious-secret plot dangler finally ends in this issue. How long's that plotline been around? Thirty years? Eighty years? **LAST MONTH:** 8

3 JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

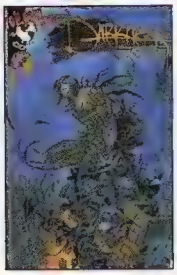
What the–? *JLA* #1 stays strong on the charts and *JLA* #2 drops right off? Comics is a crazy business. For months now, we've been explainin' to ya why *JLA* #2 was just as hot, if not hotter, than its immediate predecessor due to fewer copies in print. Now this happens. We blame the Visigoths. **LAST MONTH:** 2

4 THUNDERBOLTS #1

WRITER: Kurt Busiek
ARTISTS: Mark Bagley and Vince Russell

Let's talk about secrets, good and bad. Good secret: the Thunderbolts turned out to be the Masters of Evil! Wow! What a jaw-droppin' revelation! Bad secret: "The Crying Game." Hand us a bucket, lunch is comin' back up for a return engagement. Let's thank Mr. Busiek for knowin' the difference. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

5 THE DARKNESS #1



WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri and Batt

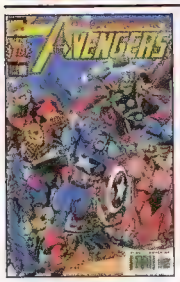
Here's why Marc Silvestri is a canny businessman: The original title for *The Darkness* was *Spookytime Playhouse*. Somehow Silvestri figured that wasn't ominous enough. Other rejections: *Fright Factory* and *Scary Scary*. Silvestri musta done something right; this book's been hot since forever. **LAST MONTH:** 10

6 WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Sara Pezzini, that inflatable love doll of justice, needs to step aside and let someone new into the top 10. 'Cept if Sara doesn't wanna go, she ain't goin'. YOU try tellin' the wielder of the mystical Witchblade to get lost. You'll be pickin' your teeth out of your ass. **LAST MONTH:** 1

7 THE AVENGERS #1



WRITER: Kurt Busiek
ARTISTS: George Pérez and Al Vey

Hear that collective sigh of relief reverberating around the comic book world? It's 'cause Marvel's core titles are good again. Really good. It's been a loooong time, friends and neighbors. And, by the look of *Avengers* #1, the books are generating some back-market heat. **LAST MONTH:** N.R.

8 NIGHTWING #19

WRITER: Chuck Dixon
ARTISTS: Scott McDaniel and Karl Story

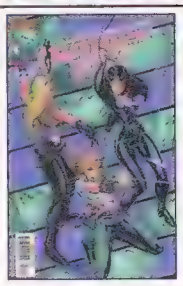
Hey, it's *Nightwing* #19. Here? Hey, waitaminnit. We remember now. You were that "Cataclysm" tie-in with super-duper low orders. You were that book that sold out in about three seconds. No wonder you're making the scene. Kick back and relax...you want a Coke or something? **LAST MONTH:** N.R.

9 BATTLE CHASERS #1

WRITERS: Joe Madureira and Munier Sharrieff
ARTISTS: Joe Madureira and Tom McWeeney

Within 48 hours (Forty-eight hours!) of its release, this new Joe Mad joint was selling for two to three times its $2.50 cover price! And people think the stock market's soaring these days! Looks like collectors everywhere have become *Battle Chasers* chasers. Gordon Gecko, take note. **LAST MONTH:** N.R.

10 DANGER GIRL #1



WRITERS: J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

Let's explain what makes this li'l funnybook so dam piping-hot. Its first run sold out instantly. 'Course, there were 10,000 reorder copies available. And *they* sold out instantly. The book's still going for about cover price, but it's a trend that ain't gonna last. **LAST MONTH:** N.R.

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **APRIL**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

The five *original* X-Men meet in Alaska to secretly plot the team's future.

1. Uncanny X-Men #356 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #76 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #73 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
4. Wolverine #125 (Marvel)
5. Avengers #5 (Marvel)
6. Superman Forever (Collector's Edition; DC)
7. Fantastic Four #6 (Marvel)
8. JLA #19 (DC)
9. Captain America #6 (Marvel)
10. Iron Man #5 (Marvel)
11. Witchblade #22 (Top Cow/Image)
12. Danger Girl #2 (Cliffhanger/Image)
13. Battle Chasers #1 (Cliffhanger/Image)
14. Curse of the Spawn #20 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
15. Generation X #39 (Marvel)
16. X-Men Unlimited #19 (Marvel)
17. JLA: Year One #6 (DC)
18. Amazing Spider-Man #435 (Marvel)
19. X-Force #78 (Marvel)
20. X-Factor #146 (Marvel)
21. Incredible Hulk #465 (Marvel)
22. X-Man #39 (Marvel)
23. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #92 (Marvel)
24. Marvel Annual '98 Starring: X-Men & Dr. Doom (Mar.)
25. Cable #55 (Marvel)
26. Spectacular Spider-Man #258 (Marvel)
27. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #7 (WildStorm/Image)
28. Tales of the Witchblade #5 (Top Cow/Image)
29. Gen^{13} #28 (WildStorm/Image)
30. Sensational Spider-Man #28 (Marvel)
31. X-Men/Alpha Flight #2 (Marvel)
32. Action Comics #745 (DC)
33. Adventures of Superman #558 (DC)
34. Superman: The Man of Steel #80 (DC)
35. KISS: The Psycho Circus #9 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
36. Excalibur #121 (Marvel)
37. Thunderbolts #15 (Marvel)
38. Batman #555 (DC)
39. Jim Lee's C•23 #1 (WildStorm/Image)
40. Green Lantern #99 (DC)
41. Astro City #14 (Homage/Image)
42. Detective Comics #722 (DC)
43. Nightwing #21 (DC)
44. Alpha Flight #11 (Marvel)
45. Menace #1 (Awesome)
46. Preacher #38 (Vertigo/DC)
47. Deadpool #17 (Marvel)
48. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #75 (DC)
49. The Flash #138 (DC)
50. Star Wars: Crimson Empire #5 (Dark Horse)
51. Marvel Universe #1 (Marvel)
52. Wonder Woman #134 (DC)
53. Nightwing and Huntress #2 (DC)
54. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #107 (DC)
55. Robin #54 (DC)
56. The Tenth #8 (Image)
57. Gen^{12} #3 (WildStorm/Image)
58. Catwoman #58 (DC)
59. Supergirl #22 (DC)
60. Mar. Annual '98 Starring: Machine Man & Bastion (Mar.)
61. Altered Image #1 (Image)
62. Lady Death #4 (Chaos!)
63. Batman: Bane of the Demon #4 (DC)
64. Legends of the DC Universe #5 (DC)
65. WildCORE #5 (Image)
66. Star Wars: The Last Command #5 (D.H.)
67. S. Wars: Shadows of the Empire—Evolution #3 (D.H.)
68. Superman Villains Secret Files #1 (DC)
69. Ka-Zar #14 (Marvel)
70. Batman: The Abduction (DC)
71. Heroes for Hire #12 (Marvel)
72. Starman #43 (DC)
73. Silver Surfer #140 (Marvel)
74. Xena: Warrior Princess—Callisto #3 (Topps)
75. Coven #7 (Awesome)
76. Xena: Warrior Princess—Orpheus #2 (Topps)
77. Batman: Gordon of Gotham #1 (DC)
78. WildC.A.T.s #48 (WildStorm/Image)
79. Teen Titans #21 (DC)
80. Azrael #42 (DC)
81. Batman: The Gotham Adventures #1 (DC)
82. Daredevil #376 (Marvel)
83. Aquaman #45 (DC)
84. Star Wars: X-Wing R.S.—Masquerade #2 (D.H.)
85. Superman Forever (Standard Edition; DC)
86. Shi: The Series #9 (Crusade)
87. Elektra #19 (Marvel)
88. Shi: The Series #10 (Crusade)
89. Maverick #10 (Marvel)
90. The Omen #1 (Chaos!)
91. Green Arrow #133 (DC)
92. DV8 #17 (WildStorm/Image)
93. What If? #109 (Marvel)
94. Hitman #27 (DC)
95. Superboy #52 (DC)
96. Legion of Super-Heroes #105 (DC)
97. Legionnaires #61 (DC)
98. Lost in Space #1 (Dark Horse)
99. Gangland #1 (Vertigo/DC)
100. Fury/Agent 13 #1 (Marvel)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

SALES OF STEEL FOR SUPERMAN!

Superman Forever and Superman titles (Nos. 6, 32-34, 85)
Great Caesar's ghost! The return of Big Blue equaled big sales for DC. And lookie here–if you combined the sales of the *Superman Forever* Collector's Edition (with freaky magic-motion "lenticular" cover) and Standard Edition (regular cover), the book would have ranked at No. 3 overall! As if that wasn't enough, the return-to-tradition event boosted the *other* Supes books 10 percent across the board! Clark Kent looks good in *basic* blue!

Danger Girl #2 and Battle Chasers #1 (Nos. 12, 13)
Let's go out on a limb here: *Battle Chasers* #1 is under-ordered. The spankin'-new series from hotshot artist Joe Madureira (*Uncanny X-Men*) actually came in *behind* the #2 issue of its Cliffhanger sister, *Danger Girl*? It would seem to defy all ordering logic. By the way, a *Battle Chasers* Chromium edition got orders for more than 31,000 copies, but the print run was strictly limited to 5,000 copies, so the Chromium was dropped from the chart. 'Bye!

Green Lantern #99 (No. 40)
Boxers or briefs? Paper or plastic? Kyle Rayner or the late Hal Jordan? At least one of these questions got answered in *Green Lantern* #99, as the dead-for-two-years Green Lantern Hal time-traveled from a time when he *was* alive and began his adventures with current GL Kyle. Sales were up 10 percent on a book that's only a *lead-in* to the big #100. Tune in next month to see what happens with that issue.

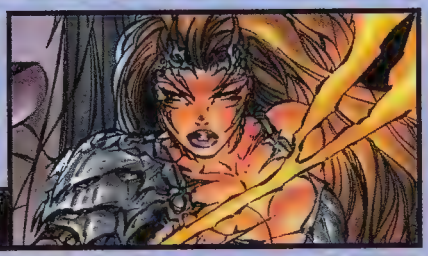
Starman #43 (No. 72)
They say every little bit helps. Little bits of word-of-mouth are what keep *Starman*, the carefully crafted James Robinson-written superhero series, on the rise. Ever since a DC marketing push with #29 a little over a year ago, the title has been on a steady upward track. It took yet another nice bounce up this month, aided this time by a most-beneficial guest appearance from the JLA.

Silver Surfer #140 (No. 73)
This book reunited the critically acclaimed *Moonshadow* team of writer J.M. DeMatteis and artist Jon J Muth for a chunky sales gain over the previous issue. Oh, yeah–this ish also developed the relationship between the Surfer and Alicia Masters *and* tied in to February's huge-selling *Fantastic Four* #4. That helped, too.

Green Arrow #133 (No. 91)
Bull's-eye! DC's favorite emerald archer had a sales gain of–Get this!–25 percent this month! But it had little to do with ol' Connor Hawke. A guest appearance by the JLA (who are certainly getting around these days) spiked sales and testified once again to the super-popularity of DC's frontline superteam.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at April's top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



GIRL POWER! Witchblade leads the pack of *femme fatales* this month.

TOP 10 CHICK TITLE BOOKS

1. Witchblade #22 (Top Cow/Image, No. 11)
2. Danger Girl #2 (Cliffhanger/Image, No. 12)
3. Tales of the Witchblade #5 (Top Cow/Image, No. 28)
4. Menace #1 (Awesome, No. 45)
5. Wonder Woman #134 (DC, No. 52)
6. Catwoman #58 (DC, No. 58)
7. Supergirl #22 (DC, No. 59)
8. Lady Death #4 (Chaos!, No. 62)
9. Xena: Warrior Princess—Callisto #3 (Topps, No. 74)
10. Xena: Warrior Princess—Orpheus #2 (Topps, No. 76)

TOP 10 B&W BOOKS

1. Strangers in Paradise #14 (Abstract Studio, No. 113)
2. Shi: Black, White and Red #2 (Crusade, No. 115)
3. Dragonball Z #2 (Viz, No. 118)
4. Dragonball #2 (Viz, No. 131)
5. The Crow/Razor: Kill the Pain #1 (London Night, No. 146)
6. Gunsmith Cats: Goldie vs. Misty #6 (Dark Horse, No. 152)
7. Oh My Goddess!: Miss Keiichi #2 (Dark Horse, No. 154)
8. X-Men: The Manga #6 (Marvel, No. 164)
9. X-Men: The Manga #7 (Marvel, No. 167)
10. Ranma 1/2 Part Seven #3 (Viz, No. 168)

LOOKING BACK

Wonder what was topping the charts FIVE YEARS AGO? Here you go!

'HOLLOW'-GRAM Used to be, if you made it shiny, they would come.

1. Spawn #13 (Image)
2. WildC.A.T.s Trilogy #1 (Image)
3. ShadowHawk II #1 (Image)
4. X-O Manowar #0 (Valiant)
5. StormWatch #0 (Image)
6. Deathblow #2 (Image)
7. X-Factor #92 (Marvel)
8. Youngblood: Strikefile #3 (Image)
9. Brigade #2 (Image)
10. Superman #79 (DC)

Seven "top 10" books from Image? Five of which are dead today? Yep. Smells like 1993 to us. But what's with that random Marvel book? Well, *X-Factor* #92 had...a bright, shiny hologram on it! Everybody knows the only thing better than a hologram is...uh...a Chromium-covered *X-O Manowar* zero issue, we guess. Thank God we live in saner times.

GUEST OF HONOR TODD McFARLANE

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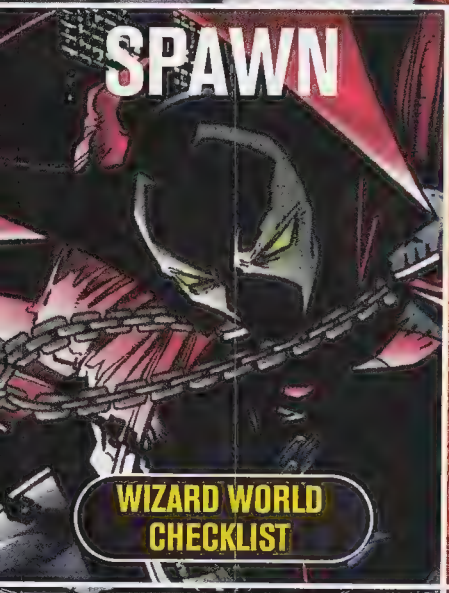
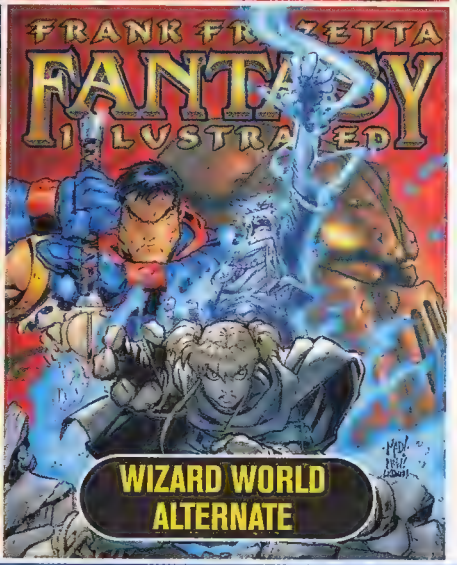


WIZARD WORLD CHECKLIST

PREVIEW

SPECIAL SUMMER CON EXCLUSIVE

PREVIEW



WIZARD WORLD ALTERNATE

PREVIEW

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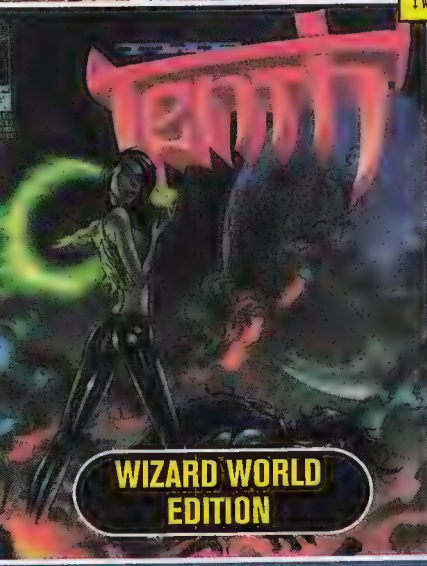

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Advance ticket orders will receive a *CLIFFHANGER #0* exclusive variant comic book (with art by J. Scott Campbell, Joe Madureira & Humberto Ramos) and early VIP admission to the show, before the doors open to the general public (Sat. and Sun. only).

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MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-minute comic book prices available on the planet. To ensure that our values are as timely as possible, we constantly communicate with our ever-expanding network of comic book retailers and regularly send scouts to check prices in stores and at shows throughout the country. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... and best of all, you can learn at home. The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

When a book has changed in value since last month's listing, it's shaded by either a red or blue bar. If the comic has risen in value, it's marked by a red bar. If it has fallen in value, it's marked by a blue bar. Every new issue and/or title listing is marked by a green bar. A yellow bar indicates an issue that is experiencing heavy market trading activity, but has not changed in value since last issue. See? Easy as pie. (And we love pie.)

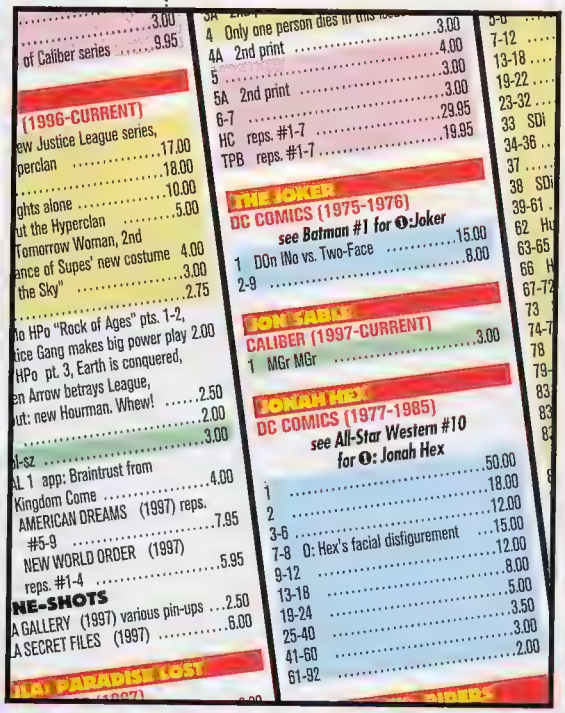
ALPHABETIZING

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. So, "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," and "The Astonishing X-Men" is listed under "Astonishing;" "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" in alphabetizing when it occurs as an interior part of the title. Using the one-word-at-a-time approach, all titles starting with the word "Blood," including "Blood Syndicate," are used up before we go on to titles such as "Bloodfire/Hellina" and "Bloodshot." Abbreviations such as "Dr." will be found before titles starting with "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

- ❶ ..... First Appearance of
- anniv ..... Anniversary issue
- A ..... Appearance
- B ..... Begin stories with
- C ..... Cameo that pre-dates ❶
- cvr ..... Cover
- D ..... Death/Destruction of
- GN ..... Graphic Novel
- HC ..... Hardcover
- IR ..... Identity revealed
- J ..... Joins
- L ..... Last story with
- M ..... Married
- O ..... Origin
- p ..... part #
- PF ..... Prestige Format
- Q ..... Quits
- R ..... Return of
- SC ..... Softcover
- sz ..... Size
- TPB ..... Trade Paperback
- w/ ..... With
- w/o ..... Without



MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown to the left. Now, keep in mind that one person's Mint is another's Near Mint. And many things can factor into grading a comic's value: its age, the supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability of a title, its current popularity, and most importantly, what specific condition the comic is in. "Dammit, Jim, I'm a doctor, not a comic grader!" Hey, relax. We'll not only show you how to use this price guide, but how to grade your comics too. Just read along and before you know it, you'll be able to dazzle your dates with all sorts of hip comic lingo.

It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being lousy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! ¡Un libro muy guapo! To be Mint, a comic must appear absolutely like the day it was printed, with no nicks, dings or creases. It's gotta be clean as a whistle. Corners are perfectly sharp without a tear or shred, the colors are crystal clear, the cover gloss is still there and even the friggin' staples are perfect. Many comics produced today fall short of Mint standards. Remember, no imperfections may be allowed in a Mint comic. Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. Just a notch or two below perfect. It might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. Comics in this condition should do any collection proud, unless you're some weird, anal comic perfectionist. All prices in this guide are for Near Mint copies, which are 100 percent of guide listings.

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. This is clean and sharp in every way and at first glance may appear Near Mint. At closer range, however, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Fine-Very Fine books are above-average, clean, bright copies lacking the crispness associated with VF. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle. Several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers may be expected, and several tiny color flakes are permitted. No subscription creases or spine rolls are allowed. Corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. Fine-Very Fine books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

FINE (FN): This rates a 5 out of 10. Fine books are slightly better than average with obvious signs of wear, but are still clean and bright without major creasing. Fine books go for 40 percent of price guide listings.

VERY GOOD (VG): A whopping 3 out of 10. Average, at best. Very Good comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

GOOD (G), FAIR (FR) and POOR (P): All are 1 or less out of 10. These books...suck. They are considered below average and heavily worn. These are the comics that have been read and re-read without regard to preservation. Good books go for 10 percent of price guide listings. Fair books can have loose pages or pieces missing from the cover and sell for 3 percent of price guide listings. Poor books can have missing covers, pages, etc. These books are really sorry, and they go for 1 percent of price guide listings.

KEY: price went up | price went down | this one's new | book is hot

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CREATOR ABBREVIATIONS

Abadzis, Nick ....NAb
Abell, Dusty ....DAb
Abnett, Dan ....DAt
Adams, Art ....AAd
Adams, Michael ....MAd
Adams, Neal ....NAd
Adkins, Dan ....DAd
Adlard, Charlie ....CAd
Ahlquist, Mark ....MAq
Akins, Tony ....TAk
Albrecht, Jeff ....JAb
Alcatena ....ALc
Allred, Laura ....LAl
Allred, Michael ....MAl
Altieri, Kevin ....KAt
Altstaetter, Karl ....KAl
Amaro, Gary ....GAm
Ammerman, David ....DAm
Anderson, Brent ....BAn
Blaustein, Adam ....ABl
Blevins, Bret ....BBl
Bogdanove, Jon ....JBg
Bolinger, Kat ....KBo
Bolland, Brian ....BBo
Bolton, John ....JBo
Bond, Phillip ....PBo
Booth, Bret ....BBt
Boring, Wayne ....WBo
Boyd, Robert ....RBo
Breeding, Brett ....BBd
Brereton, Daniel ....DBn
Brevoort, Tom ....TBr
Breyfogle, Norm ....NBr
Bridges, Vic ....VBr
Bridwell, E. Nelson ....EBr
Bright, Mark ....MBr
Brigman, June ....JBr
Broderick, Pat ....PBr
Chiarello, Mark ....MCh
Chichester, Dan ....Ch
Childress, Jan ....JCs
Chiodo, Joe ....JCd
Choi, Brandon ....BCo
Christopher, Tom ....TCr
Chun, Anthony ....ACh
Churchill, Ian ....ICh
Cirocco, Frank ....FCi
Claremont, Chris CCl
Clark, Manny ....MCl
Clark, Scott ....SCk
Cleary, John ....JCy
Clift, Mike ....MCf
Clowes, Daniel ....DCl
Cockrum, Dave ....DCo
Coker, Tomm ....TCk
Colan, Gene ....GCo
Collins, Max ....MCo
Collins, Mike ....MCn
Collins, Nancy A. ....NCo

ARTISTS & WRITERS

Anderson, Murphy ....MAn
Andru, Ross ....RAn
Aparo, Jim ....JAp
Aragonés, Sergio ....SAr
Arcudi, John ....JAr
Arlen, Renato ....RAr
Artis, Tom ....TAr
Ashford, Richard ....RAs
Augustyn, Brian ....BAu
Austin, Terry ....TAu
Ayers, Dick ....DAy
Bachalo, Chris ....CBc
Badger, Mark ....MBd
Bagley, Mark ....MBa
Bair, Michael ....MBi
Baker, Kyle ....KBa
Balent, Jim ....JBl
Banks, Darryl ....DBk
Baron, Mike ....MBo
Barr, Mike W. ....MWb
Barreto, Eduardo ....EBa
Barrett, Neal ....NBa
Barriero, Ricardo ....RBa
Barry, Dan ....DBa
Bates, Cary ....CBa
Batista, Chris ....CBt
Beachum, Mike ....MBe
Beatty, Terry ....TBe
Beauvais, Denis ....DBe
Benefiel, Scott ....SBe
Benes, Ed ....EBe
Benitez, Joe ....JOe
Benjamin, Ryan ....RBn
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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIBENCE QUOTIENT

Hey, batter batter batter! We're back for another go-'round at Trivia Central, and—oh, yeah, we'll come up with some stupid way to score your results. Okay, this month, let's grade your comic book knowledge against the more horrendous, butchered dialects in funnybook history.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*Gambit. "I be annoyin' ya, chere, I gare-on-tee." Somebody drop this overrated Cajun yutz down an elevator shaft.*
5-9	*Luke Cage. Get the NAACP on the horn, pronto–this guy's setting race relations back 50 years.*
10-14	*Banshee. "Ye'll nae be flaeberin' th' ach, lad. Ach. Ach."*
15	*Sugar Man. Hetalks like this. Thefirst two words of every word balloon run together. Itbites.*

1 **The dark, twisted version of the Hulk from 90 years in the future was known as...**
A) the Leader.
B) the Maestro.
C) the Puppet Master.
D) Dave, the Flatulent Spider-Pony (Making his third, count 'em, *third* "CBIQ" appearance!).

2 **What did Satan receive as a parting gift when that happy-go-lucky Saint of Killers departed from Hell?**
A) the Saint of Killers' soul
B) the key to the mortal plane
C) the badge the Saint of Killers wore when he was a mortal sheriff
D) a bullet in the head

3 **The present-day Flash, Wally West, gained his super-speed powers when...**
A) a bolt of lightning hit a cabinet of chemicals which doused him. Just like what happened to the Barry Allen Flash. Ugh.
B) he drank a concentrated isotope of Gingold soda, the same soda that gave Ralph Dibny, the Elongated Man, his powers. Boy, these DC origins are painful.
C) he found a rock. Just like the one that Ray Palmer, the Atom, found. Yay!
D) Ahhhhhhh!! Can't...take...any...more...crappy... DC...origins! Move...on...to...question...four...

4 **Who's the babe who makes Fone Bone feel all warm and funny inside?**
A) Rose
B) Daisy
C) Thorn
D) Bruce, the curiously hairless roof-shingler with the killer butt

5 **Which Earth-2 deadwood was NOT trimmed away during *Crisis on Infinite Earths*?**
A) Superman
B) The Flash
C) Wonder Woman
D) Robin

6 **When Spidey got those brand-spanking-new duds during *Secret Wars*, from where did the...um...costume-making machine draw its inspiration?**
A) Spider-Woman
B) a spider-shaped constellation
C) armor worn by an ancient race of insect warriors
D) the Grendel costume

7 **The Joker wasn't foolin' around when he offed that reviled Robin, Jason Todd. How'd he do it?**
A) Chopped him up, then fed him to sharks.
B) Beat him to death, then blew him up.
C) Shot him, then set him on fire.
D) Pie, and lots of it.

8 **Angela, that scantily clad Spawn-hunter, first appeared in:**
A) *Spawn* #1
B) *Image* #0
C) *Spawn* #9
D) *Unrealistically Depicted Comic Book Redheads* #14

9 **Which Amalgam hero is a combination of Captain America and Superman?**
A) Super Soldier
B) Super Captain
C) Captain Super
D) Over Under

10 **Hulk-hater General "Thunderbolt" Ross' first name is:**
A) Tom
B) Terry
C) Thaddeus
D) Betsy

11 **Which mutant icon did Jubilee have the pleasure of meeting for the first time while he was nailed to a cross?**
A) Sabretooth
B) Wolverine
C) Magneto
D) Gambit

12 **Which herald of Galactus scooped up the island of Manhattan and launched it into space?**
A) Silver Surfer
B) Terrax
C) Nova
D) Firelord

13 **While the original Phoenix was out causing trouble, the real Jean Grey was...**
A) in a cocoon at the bottom of the ocean.
B) incorporated into the psychic plane.
C) masquerading as Erik the Red.
D) busy finishing her collection of *Unrealistically Depicted Comic Book Redheads* comics.

14 **This spunky, sassy, saucy danger girl is the newest recruit in the shadow organization known as...uh...Danger Girl.**
A) Silicon Valerie
B) Natasha Badenov
C) Jennifer Valese
D) Abbey Chase

15 **In "Heroes Reborn" continuity (*shudder*), who was the first supervillain the Fantastic Four battled?**
A) Mole Man
B) Doctor Doom
C) Super-Skrull
D) No, not another "Heroes Reborn" cheap shot here. Just us saying that if "Heroes Reborn" was responsible for the Captain America, Iron Man, Thor and Avengers we have now (No, we didn't forget the FF, though we'd *like* to forget the post-Lobdell team. Pee-yew!), we're just glad it happened.

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...

BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

We've Converted

For a brief moment we were all honorary Jews.

The date was April 12–Passover weekend–and *Wizard* Managing Editor Andrew Kardon, Specials Editor Doug Goldstein and Staff Writer Matt Senreich drew together about a dozen Wizard staffers to experience a true "Seder," the customary holiday meal that consists of prayers and multiple courses of Jewish delicacies. We downed matzoh by the pound, matzoh ball soup by the gallon and even ate something called "gefilte fish" (Which we looked up after we left, discovering that there is no such thing as a "gelfilte fish." To date, we still have no idea what that was we ate.) "I'm just curious to see how my new brothers in arms handle it when they discover what effect eating THAT much matzoh in one sitting has on the human body," laughed head chef Andrew Kardon. "It'll be a while before they have to crap, but when they do, it'll be close to a religious experience."

BEANIE BABIES Wizard Press staffers ate...um, *stuff* at our first unofficial Passover Seder.

TOP 10 real reasons why the new Superman movie was delayed

10 Tim Burton waiting for Prince to be busy and thus unable to contribute to the soundtrack.

9 Margot Kidder kept sneaking onto the set screaming, "You've got me–who's got you?!?" and then eating bugs.

8 Richard Pryor too burned-out to ski down buildings these days.

7 *El Niño.*

6 Huge "who comes first in the credits" debate between the gaffer and the best boy escalated into full-fledged riot.

5 Teri Hatcher's "no nudity" clause. Yeah, like an audience would pay to see her act.

4 Nicolas Cage's pacemaker is poorly calibrated and makes him convulse repeatedly.

3 The CGI Beppo the Supermonkey just waaaay too much money.

2 The ghost of original TV Superman George Reeves kept materializing on the set, telling Tim Burton to "get a haircut" and then kicking him in the nuts.

1 Rogaine? It only works in *select* cases.

CBIQ answers...

1. B	4. C	7. B	10. C	13. A
2. D	5. B	8. C	11. B	14. D
3. A	6. A	9. A	12. B	15. A

ONE OF THE DAMNED

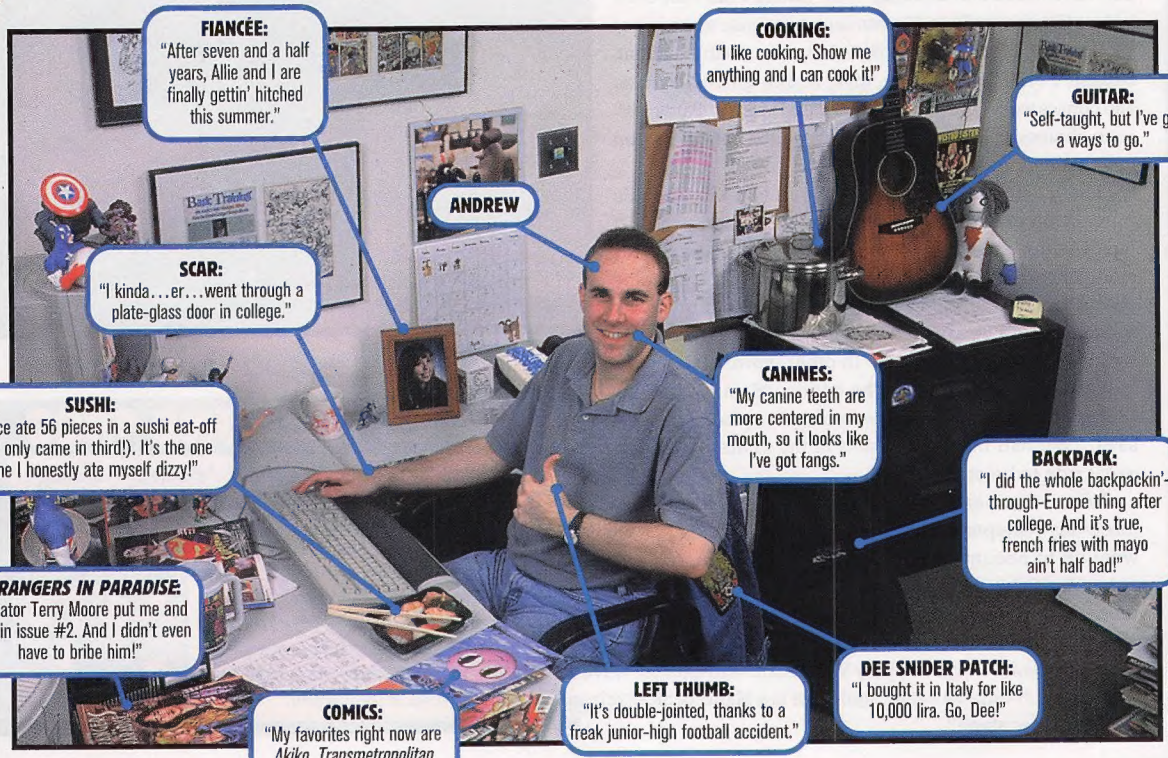
DOING HARD TIME

Andrew Kardon MANAGING EDITOR

WHY WE PAY HIM: "On the administrative end, I work with our freelancer base, recruiting new writers and outlining and assigning all of *Wizard*'s features. I also edit a bunch of columns and features for content, including my personal favorite, 'Basic Training,' where I call up artists and get 'em to draw stuff for us."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "I wanna do the Yoda puppet." (In reference to controlling a puppet during the production of a short film.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "Giving rock legend Dee Snider of Twisted Sister (Go, Dee!) a tour of the Wizard offices after he just called me out of the blue."



PHOTOS: PAUL SCHIRALDI

TIME TRAVEL by PATRICK SAURIOL

DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT

The gothic 'Batman' brought modern comics to the mainstream nine years ago

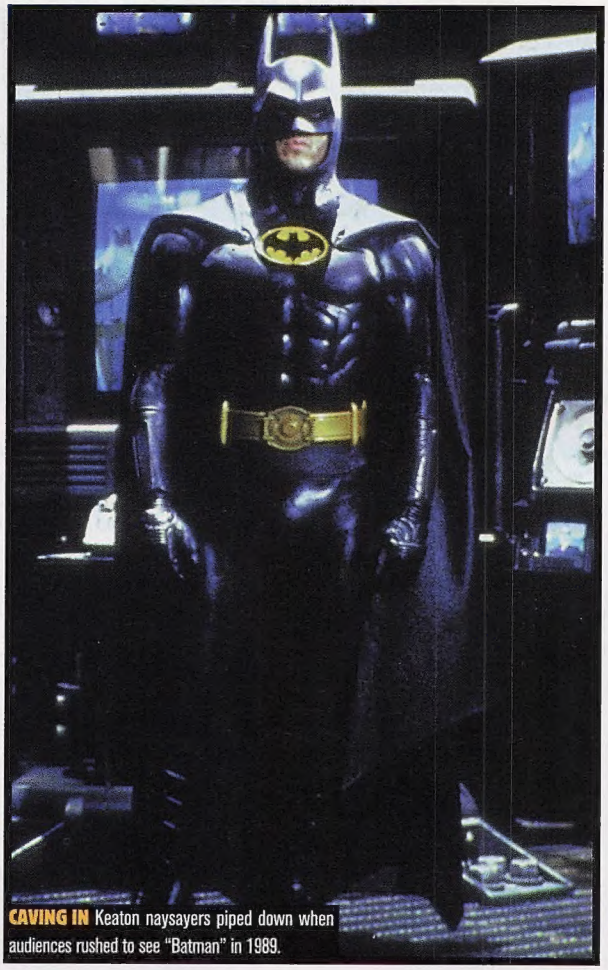
"For about six months I couldn't escape what I did for a living," says Batman Group Editor Dennis O'Neil. "I'd be walking down any block in Manhattan and there would be three people wearing Batman shirts on the street." It was 1989, and Batmania was like a tidal wave sweeping the nation—kind of odd considering how, just the summer before, comic fans were in an uproar over comedic actor Michael Keaton being cast as the film's lead.

All doubt was erased, however, when the first "Batman" trailer blew onto screens in January 1989. Director Tim Burton's dark vision of a majestic and imposing Gotham City and its brooding champion riveted audiences. Theater managers reported people were buying tickets just to see the 90-second trailer, then leaving before the movie even started. Something was happening, but no one realized this was just the tip of the iceberg.

Over the coming months, as sales of Batman comics increased, DC took the opportunity to launch the new *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* series, and even let "Batman" screenwriter Sam Hamm pen a few issues of *Detective Comics*. Although Warner Bros. committed a modest $8 million towards promoting the $35-million film, sales of Batman-related merchandise went through the roof even before the movie's June 23 premiere; best-case estimates of $150 million in profits were doubled, then doubled again. Batman T-shirts, hats, cards, toys, books, games, puzzles and comics were everywhere. And while Prince's "Batdance" song climbed radio charts, kids shaved the Bat-symbol on their heads.

The movie's massive hype also raised the public's perception of how comic books had changed. Casting Jack Nicholson as The Joker shattered all pre-existing stereotypes that A-list actors couldn't pull off four-color characters. The old image of Adam West in tights was replaced with a hero who'd been psychologically scarred by his exposure to violence. In other words, the movie looked a heck of a lot like the comic. "Sam [Hamm] and Tim [Burton] were on the same wavelength as the comics," O'Neil says. "We had the same vision of the character and it was a great ride to be on."

When "Batman" opened, it broke box-office records for three-day receipts, netting $43.6 million. Eventually, "Batman" went on to become the biggest money-making film of 1989, spawning three sequels to date. Currently, Warner Bros. has ideas for a fifth installment of Batman, but is busy directing its energy towards Burton's latest superhero epic, "Superman Lives," in which Nicolas Cage will play Superman. Will another wave of "Batmania" sweep the nation again...or is a Mania of Steel primed to take center stage?



CAVING IN Keaton naysayers piped down when audiences rushed to see "Batman" in 1989.

DATELINE: JUNE 1989

While theaters sold out of "Batman" tickets, moviegoers settled for Robin Williams in *"Dead Poets Society."*...TV viewers laughed at ABC's *"Roseanne"* every Tuesday night....The New Kids on the Block topped *Billboard*'s charts with the group's first hit single *"I'll Be Loving You (Forever)."*...The eccentric and extravagant actress *Zsa Zsa Gabor* was arrested for slapping a policeman.

ROSEANNE

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